

DELHI UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

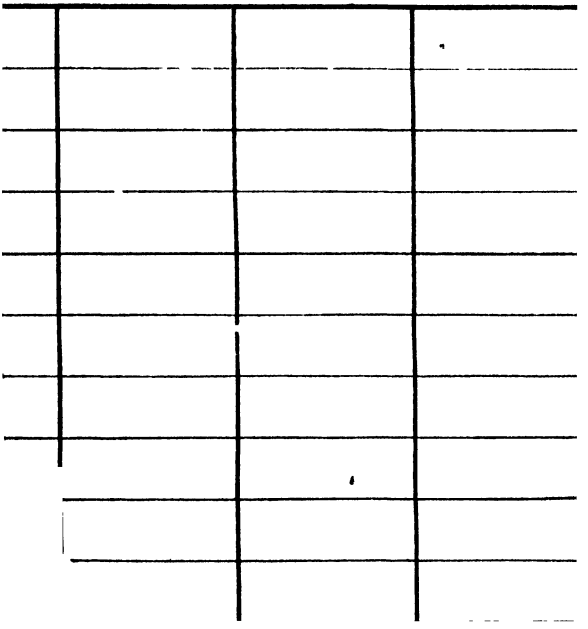
DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

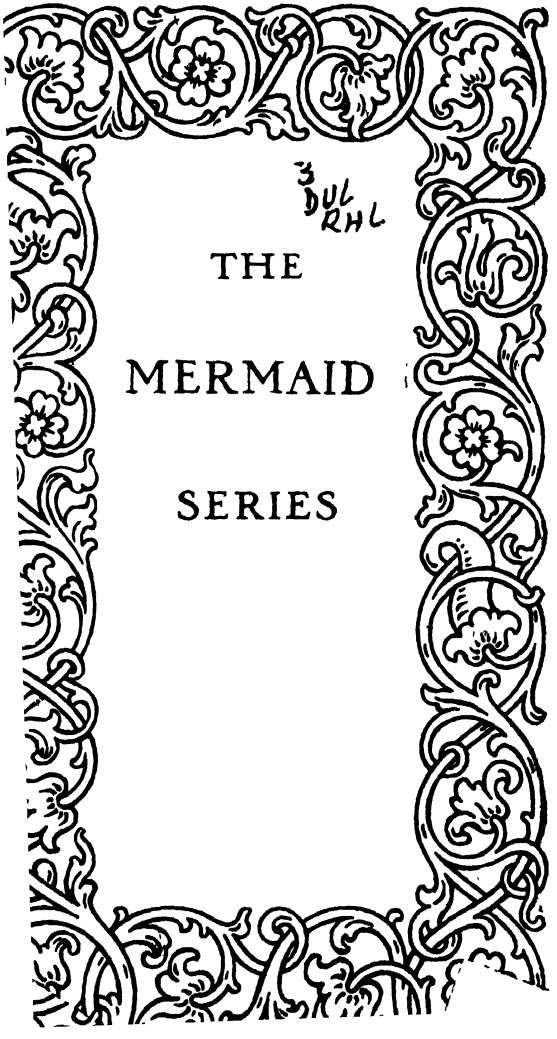
O:2x GC

202139

Date of release for loan

k should be returned on or before the date last stamped An overdue charge of 0 5 nP. will be charged for each book is kept overtime.




3
DUL
RHL

THE

MERMAID

SERIES



NERO AND OTHER PLAYS

THE MERMAID SERIES.

Literal Reproductions of the Old Text, with etched Frontispieces.

The Best Plays of Christopher Marlowe. Edited, with Critical Memoir and Notes by HAVELOCK ELLIS, and containing a General Introduction to the Series by JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

The Best Plays of Thomas Otway. Introduction and Notes by the Hon RODEN NOEL.

The Complete Plays of William Congreve. Edited by ALEX C EWALD.

The Best Plays of John Ford. Edited by HAVELOCK ELLIS.

The Best Plays of Philip Massinger. With Critical and Biographical Essay and Notes by ARTHUR SYMONS 2 vols.

The Best Plays of Thomas Heywood. Edited by A. W VERITY. With Introduction by J. A SYMONDS.

The Complete Plays of William Wycherley. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by W. C. WARD.

Nero and Other Plays. Edited by H. P. HORNE, ARTHUR SYMONS, A. W. VERITY, and H. ELLIS.

The Best Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. Introduction and Notes by J. ST. LOE STRACHEY. 2 vols.

The Best Plays of Webster and Tourneur. With an Introduction and Notes by JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

The Best Plays of Thomas Middleton. With an Introduction by ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. 2 vols.

The Best Plays of James Shirley. With Introduction by EDMUND GOSSE.

The Best Plays of Thomas Dekker. Notes by ERNEST RHYS.

The Best Plays of Ben Jonson. Vols. 1, 2 & 3. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by BRINSLEY NICHOLSON and C. H. HERFORD.

The Complete Plays of Richard Steele. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by G. A. AITKEN.

The Best Plays of George Chapman. Edited by WILLIAM LYON PHELPS, Instructor of English Literature at Yale College.

The Select Plays of Sir John Vanbrugh. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by A. E. H. SWAIN.

The Best Plays of John Dryden. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by GEORGE SAINTSBURY. 2 vols.

The Best Plays of Thomas Shadwell. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

Other Volumes in Preparation.



NATHANIEL FIELD.

From the Picture in the Dulwich Gallery

THE MERMAID SERIES

NERO & OTHER PLAYS

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES,

BY

HERBERT P. HORNE, HAVELOCK ELLIS, ARTHUR SYMONS, AND A. WILSON VERITY



"I lie and dream of your full Mermaid wine."—*Beaumont*

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS



PREFACE.



HY," said Charles Lamb in one of the notes to his *Extracts from the Garrick Plays*, "why do we go on with ever-new editions of Ford and Massinger, and the thrice-reprinted selections of Dodsley? What we want is as many volumes more as these latter consist of, filled with plays of which we know comparatively nothing." Lamb was speaking of *The Two Angry Women of Abington*, one of the plays contained in this volume, a volume in which we have attempted to do what he thought so desirable. It was announced in the prospectus to the Mermaid Series, that a feature would be made of plays by little-known writers which, although often so admirable, are now almost inaccessible. Of the plays contained in the present volume, *Nero*, *The Parliament of Bees* and *Humour out of Breath* are given for the first time with a modernised text, and none of the plays here included have hitherto been accessible in any form but that of a limited and costly







OF the author of *The Tragedy of Nero* nothing has been handed down to us; of the play itself only what is contained in two anonymous quartos, and in a manuscript which, excepting a few notes of parallel passages from the Classics, and very many emendations of the printed text, yields us no further light. The title-page of the earlier quarto runs thus:—"THE TRAGEDY OF NERO, *Newly Written.* Imprinted at *London* by *Augustine Mathewes*, and *Iohn Norton*, for *Thomas Iones* and are to bee sold at the blacke Rauen in the Strand. 1624." Though the text is very corrupt, it is not, perhaps, more full of mistakes than is usual in the early editions of the dramatists. The title-page of the second quarto varies from the first as follows:—"THE TRAGEDY OF NERO. *Newly written.* LONDON Printed by *Aug. Mathewes*, for *Thomas Iones.* and are to be sold at his shoppe in Saint *Dunstanes* Churchyard, in Fleete-street. 1633." Many obvious mistakes in the earlier edition have here been corrected, yet for the most part it puts into worse confusion those which are not obvious. The spelling, also, throughout is more modern. On the whole the chief value of this second quarto lies in the fact that the play was sufficiently popular at that time to call forth a second edition. The manuscript is contained in a folio volume of early seventeenth-century plays among the Egerton MSS. in the British Museum. It is numbered 1994, and was purchased in 1865, at Lord Charlemont's sale. The present Tragedy the twelfth of the fifteen plays in the volume, commences on leaf 245 and continues to leaf 267. Leaves 262 to 264 are misplaced and should have been inserted between leaves

must content myself with touching upon only two of the many thoughts here suggested. And for the first of these. It is this, that in the present play we see, as we cannot do in a play of Shakespeare's or Fletcher's where the brilliancy of their imagination blinds everything, what was common to the entire age of Elizabeth, and died only with Milton. For Marlowe, and for those who came after him, there was a new, an unexplored wealth of language. Common thoughts of common things were yet to be expressed in literary English as we now know it; and a phrase which to us is vernacular, and a thing of everyday, fell upon their ears with the delight and surprise that now only a turn or image can give. The whole land drank of this abundant spirit and gave thanks. It touched not only those who were striving to found a literature which should endure, but through it the Clerk of the Pells was enabled to fill his Majesty's accounts with as much human interest as Francis, Lord St. Albans, mingled with the grave style of his state letters. And so from this arose the superb sense of resource and mastery which remains to us in the generous life and vigour still saturating everything they wrote. No wonder then these Elizabethans exulted in their gift, and searched all heaven and earth for that whereby they might use it. No wonder, also, that they exceeded the limit of that gift and marred its beauty by a delight in conceits, scorning the severe restraint and perfection of form which had been the chief distinction of the Classics.

But to pass on. Perhaps what is now in my mind to say finally amounts to the consideration of how far it is needful that a historical drama should be satisfactory from the historical standpoint. Let us first see how our author uses history. We find him well acquainted not only with Suetonius' Life of Nero, but with Tacitus also, and Dion Cassius. In the incidents of his play he follows these writers very closely; he is careful, also, to preserve the historical order of the events he is dramatising; and all the considerable persons mentioned by his authorities are to be found among the characters. But we shall perhaps get more quickly to the heart of the matter in hand by noticing where he *differs* from the histories. The events set forth in this tragedy are, historically, scattered over a period of some four years. The fires at Rome occurred some time before the death of

Poppæa, who died A.D. 65, and the revolt of Julius Vindex did not take place till A.D. 68; whereas, in the play, the impression received is one of quick succession. Such a divergence from history cannot but insinuate an air of incompleteness, a sense that the matter proposed has only been partially mastered. On the other hand similar divergence from what actually took place, is sometimes introduced with added effect, for example in the fifth scene of the fourth act. Suetonius tells us that Nero killed Poppæa with a kick when she was in sorry health (*gravida et aegra*), because she found fault with him for returning late in the evening from driving his chariot. Instead of which, our author makes a young man participating in the conspiracy of Piso the cause of the quarrel, and so increases the interest and the incident, bringing out the wantonness of Poppæa, and the selfish cruelty of the Emperor.

These, however, are inconsiderable when compared with the last act and its treatment of the history there set forth. It is by far the weakest part of the play, and almost unworthy of the previous four parts. Yet in the most inadequate passage of all, the last speech of Nero:—

> "Oh! Rome, farewell! Farewell you theatres
> Where I so oft with popular applause
> In song and action ——"

yet here, where we should have desired the finest touches and have found the weakest, has our author struck upon the most remarkable trait in the death, and perhaps, also, in the life of Nero, upon his huge, barbaric lust of art, and his intense belief in his own powers as an artist. But except for this, perhaps accidental, gleam of insight, the entire act is heavy, wanting in incident, and what is more serious, wanting in a sense of conclusion. How different is that description of Suetonius, of the flight of the Emperor to the villa of Phaon, some four miles out of the city. As he was, with bare feet and only a faded cloak thrown over his tunic, and holding a linen cloth before his face, Nero mounted a horse, and rode off with no more than four of his followers, amongst whom was Sporus. Suddenly he is afraid because the earth quakes, and a flash of lightning is driven down before him. He hears from a neighbouring camp the noise of the soldiers crying for his destruction, and for the well-being of Galba. One by the way asks

"What news in the city of Nero?" and another, coming out of Rome, answers, "Already they pursue him." Anon his horse starts at the smell of a dead body lying in the road; and in the hurry of the moment he uncovers his face, and is recognised and saluted by one whom he had thrust from the Prætorian bands.

When he had come to the by-way where he should leave the high-road, quitting the horses and making his way between bushes and briars, and with difficulty over a bed of rushes, though not without a cloak being spread under his feet, he reached the wall at the back of the villa. There Phaon urged him to hide himself in a cave from which sand had been dug, but he answered he would not go, still living, below ground. Whilst a secret way into the villa was being made, he plucked out the thorns sticking in his cloak, for it had been torn by the briars. At last he was admited, and creeping upon his hands and knees through a small opening made for him in the wall, he went into a room for slaves which was near at hand, and lay down on a bed furnished with a very small mattress, over which was thrown an old coverlet. Meanwhile, being distressed by both hunger and thirst, he refused some stale bread which had been offered him, but drank a little tepid water.

Then those who were about him having besought him to escape the shameful death which was coming upon him, he ordered a small pit to be dug before his eyes, according to the measure of his body, and paved with pieces of marble if any could be found near at hand; and water, also, and wood to be made ready for immediate use when he should be dead, weeping at everything that was done, and saying repeatedly, "How great an artist is lost in me!" During the delay letters were brought by a post of Phaon's; he snatched at them, and read that he had been judged an enemy to the senate, and was to be sought out that he might be punished according to the custom of their forefathers. He asked what the punishment might be, and when he learned that the neck of the naked man was put into a forked whipping-post, and his body flogged to death with rods, in a moment of terror he clutched at two daggers which he carried about with him, but having tried the point of each, he put them up again, pleading that the hour when he should kill himself was not yet come. And now he calls upon Sporus to weep and beat

his breast, and now he prays someone to kill himself that thereby courage might be lent him to do likewise, the while he was upbraiding his own want of resolution thus :—" Dishonourably, despicably do I live on. This does not become Nero, it does not become him ; thou oughtest to have courage in matters such as these. Up ! man, bestir thyself."

And now the horsemen were approaching who had been commanded to take him alive. But he hearing them and repeating with a trembling voice this verse out of Homer,—

" Methinks about mine ears the sound of running horses beat,"

drove a sword into his throat, being helped to the deed by Epaphroditus, his secretary.

Here, if anywhere in the story of Nero, was a fortunate occasion for the writer of plays ; such an end to such a life should surely have proved a subject made to his hand.

These then seem to me the most suggestive of the thoughts which this play of *Nero* calls up in us, but to follow them out here may not be ; but rather like Prospero, having summoned " some vanity of mine art " before your eyes, I am fain to dismiss all with a brief reflection. It is but this :—

History seeks to show us men and events as they really were ; while the end of great dramatic writing is not merely to hold the mirror up to Nature, but looking upon Nature to distinguish between what is transitory and what is abiding, what is accidental and what is essential, and so, choosing those qualities and traits of men and women which are the more lasting and precious for our warning and example, and heightening their various passions and circumstances, to mould all into a work of art. If this is so, there would seem to be between History and Dramatic writing a radical contradiction. To say that it is vain that an artist should attempt to hide this contradiction would be an absurdity ; for whatever is possible for Art, that also is lawful. Still the question remains, has any writer completely overcome what would seem to be an insuperable objection?

HERBERT P. HORNE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NERO CÆSAR, Emperor.
TIGELLINUS SOPHONIUS.
EPAPHRODITUS, a Freedman, Secretary to NERO.
NIMPHIDIUS.
NEOPHILUS.
LUCIUS PISO, Chief of the Conspirators.
FLAVIUS SCÆVINUS, a Senator.
MILICHUS, his Freedman.
SUBRIUS FLAVIUS, Tribune of a Prætorian Cohort.
M. ANNÆUS LUCANUS, Poet.
L. ANNÆUS SENECA, Philosopher.
C. PETRONIUS ARBITER, Writer.
ANTONIUS HONORATUS.
ANNÆUS CORNUTUS, Philosopher.
A Young Man.
A Man.
Friends of SENECA.
Friend of GALBA.
Romans.
Physician, Guards, Messengers, Attendants, etc

POPPÆA SABINA, Wife of NERO.
ENANTHE.
A Woman.

SCENE—Chiefly in ROME.

NERO.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.—*A Gallery in the Golden House of* NERO.

Enter PETRONIUS ARBITER *and* ANTONIUS HONORATUS.

PET. Tush, take the wench
I showed thee now, or else some other seek.
What! can your choler no way be allayed
But with imperial stuff? [give?
Will you more titles[1] unto Cæsar

Ant. Great are thy fortunes, Nero, great thy power,
Thy empire limited with Nature's bounds;
Upon thy ground the sun doth set and rise;
The day and night are thine,
Nor can the planets, wander where they will,
See that proud earth that fears not Cæsar's name:
Yet nothing of all this I envy thee
But her, to whom the world unforced obeys,
Whose eye's more worth than all it looks upon;
In whom all beauties Nature hath enclosed
That through the wide earth or heaven are disposed.

[1] The title, I suppose, of "Cuckold."—*Bullen.*

Pet. Indeed she steals and robs each part o' th' world
With borrowed beauties to inflame thine eye;
The sea to fetch her pearl is dived into,
The diamond rocks are cut to make her shine,
To plume her pride the birds do naked sing;
When my Enanthe, in a homely gown—

Ant. Homely, i' faith!

Pet. Ay! homely in her gown,
But look upon her face and that's set out
With no sale grace, no veilèd shadows help.
Fool, that had'st rather with false lights and dark
Beguilèd be than see the ware thou buyest!

POPPÆA *enters royally attended, and passes over the stage in state.*

Ant. Great queen, whom Nature made to be her glory,
Fortune got eyes and came to be thy servant
Honour is proud to be thy title! Though
Thy beauties do draw up my soul, yet still
So bright, so glorious is thy majesty
That it beats down again my climbing thoughts.

Pet. Why, true!
Another of thy blindnesses thou seest,
Such one to love thou dar'st not speak unto.
Give me a wench that will be easily had,
Not wooed with cost, and being sent for comes;
And when I have her folded in my arms
Then Cleopatra she, or Lucrece is;
I'll give her any title.

Ant. Yet not so much her greatness and estate
My hopes dishearten as her chastity.

Pet. Chastity, fool! a word not known in courts.
Well it may lodge in mean and country homes
Where poverty and labour keeps them down,
Short sleeps and hands made hard with Tuscan wool;
But never comes to great men's palaces

Where ease and riches stirring thoughts beget,
Provoking meats and surfeit wines inflame;
Where all their setting forth's but to be wooed,
And wooed they would not be but to be won.
Will one man serve Poppæa? Nay, thou shalt
Make her as soon contented with an eye.

Enter NIMPHIDIUS.

Nim. [*Aside.*] Whilst Nero in the streets his pageants shows,
I to his fair wife's chambers sent for am.
Yon gracious stars that smiled on my birth,
And thou bright star more powerful than them all,
Whose favouring smiles have made me what I am,
Thou shalt my God, my fate, my fortune be. [*Exit.*

Ant. How saucily yon fellow
Enters the Empress' chamber.

Pet. Ay! and her too. Antonius, knowest thou him?

Ant. What? know the only favourite of the court?
Indeed, not many days ago thou mightest
Have not unlawfully asked that question.

Pet. Why is he raised?

Ant. That have I sought in him,
But never piece of good desert could find
He is Nimphidia's son, the freedwoman,
Which baseness to shake off he nothing hath
But his own pride.

Pet. You remember when Gallus, Celsus,
And others too, though now forgotten, were
Great in Poppæa's eyes?

Ant. I do, and did interpret it in them
An honourable favour they bare virtue,
Or parts like virtue.

Pet. The cause is one of theirs and this man's grace.
I once was great in wavering smiles of court;
I fell because I knew. Since have I given
My time to my own pleasures, and would how

Advise thee, too, to mean and safe delights:
The thigh's as soft the sheep's back covereth
As that with crimson and with gold adorned.
Yet, 'cause I see that thy restrained desires
Cannot their own way choose, come thou with me;
Perhaps I'll show thee means of remedy. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE II.—*A Street in Rome.*

Shouts within. Enter two Romans *meeting.*

1st Rom. Whither so fast, man? Whither so fast?

2nd Rom. Whither! but where your ears do lead you,
To Nero's triumphs and the shouts you hear.

1st Rom. Why? comes he crowned with Parthian overthrow
And brings he Vologeses[1] with him chained?

2nd Rom. Parthian overthrow? Why, he comes crowned
For victories which never Roman won;
For having Greece in her own arts overthrown,
In singing, dancing, horse-race, stage-playing.
Never—Oh, Rome had never such a prince!

1st Rom. Yet, I have heard, our ancestors were crowned
For other victories.

2nd Rom. None of our ancestors were e'er like him.

[*Within.*] Nero Apollo! Nero Hercules![2]

1st Rom. Hark how th' applauding shouts do cleave the air!
This idle talk will make me lose the sight.

Enter 3rd Roman.

3rd Rom. Whither go you? All's done i' th' Capitol,

[1] King of Parthia; *vide* Tacitus, Ann. XII. 14 and 50.
[2] Compare Dion Cassius, LXI. 20 (ed. Bekker).—*Ballen.*

And Nero, having there his tables hung
And garlands up, is to the palace gone.

Enter 4th Roman.

4th Rom. 'Twas beyond wonder; I shall never see,
Nay, I'll ne'er look to see the like of this:
Eighteen hundred and eight crowns
For several victories, and the place set down
Where, and in what, and whom he overcame.

3rd Rom. That was set down i' th' tables that were borne
Upon the soldiers' spears.

1st Rom. O made, and sometimes used for other ends!

2nd Rom. But did he win them all with singing?

3rd Rom. Faith, all with singing and with stage-playing.

1st Rom. So many crowns got with a song!

4th Rom. But did you mark the Greek musicians
Behind his chariot, hanging down their heads,
Shamed and o'ercome in their professions?
Oh, Rome was never honoured so before!

3rd Rom. But what was he that rode i' th' chariot with him?

4th Rom. That was Diodorus, the minstrel, that he favours.

3rd Rom. Was there ever such a prince!

2nd Rom. O Nero Augustus, the true Augustus!

3rd Rom. Nay, had you seen him as he rode along
With an Olympic crown upon his head
And with a Pythian on his arm,[1] you would have thought,
Looking on one, he had Apollo been,
On th' other, Hercules.

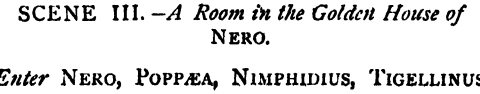
2nd Rom. I have heard my father oft repeat the triumphs
Which in Augustus Cæsar's times were shown
Upon his victory o'er the Illyrians;
But it seems it was not like to this.

[1] *Vide* Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 25.

3rd and 4th Rom. Pish! it could not be like this.

2nd, 3rd, and 4th Rom. O Nero Apollo! Nero Hercules! [*Exeunt* 2nd, 3rd, *and* 4th Roman.

1st Rom. Whether Augustus' triumph greater was
I cannot tell; his triumph's cause, I know,
Was greater far, and far more honourable.
What are we people, or our flattering voices
That always shame and foolish things applaud,
Having no spark of soul; all ears and eyes,
Pleased with vain shows, deluded by our senses,
Still enemies to wisdom and to goodness? [*Exit.*



SCENE III.—*A Room in the Golden House of* NERO.

Enter NERO, POPPÆA, NIMPHIDIUS, TIGELLINUS, EPAPHRODITUS, NEOPHILUS, *and others.*

Nero. Now, fair Poppæa, see thy Nero shine
In bright Achaia's spoils, and Rome in him.
The Capitol hath other trophies seen
Than it was wont; not spoils with blood bedewed
Or the unhappy obsequies[1] of death,
But such as Cæsar's cunning, not his force,
Hath wrung from Greece too bragging of her art.

Tig. And of this strife the glory's all your own,
Your tribunes cannot share this praise with you:
Here your centurions have no part at all;
Bootless your armies and your eagles were;
No navies helped to bring away this conquest.

Nim. Even Fortune's self, Fortune the queen of kingdoms,
That war's grim valour graceth with her deeds,
Will claim no portion in this victory.

[1] The MS. reads "*exuvias*," Latin, *exuere*, to put off.

Nero. Not Bacchus [1] drawn from Nysa down with tigers
Curbing with viny reins their wilful heads,—
Whilst some do gape upon his ivy Thyrse,
Some on the dangling grapes that crown his head,
All praise his beauty and continuing youth,—
So struck amazèd India with wonder
As Nero's glories did the Greekish towns,
Elis, and Pisa, and the rich Mycenæ,
Junonian Argos, and yet Corinth proud
Of her two seas; all which o'ercome did yield
To me their praise and prizes of their games.

Pop. Yet in your Greekish journey, we did hear,
Sparta and Athens, the two eyes of Greece,
Neither beheld your person nor your skill;
Whether because they did afford no games,
Or for their too much gravity—

Nero. Why, what
Should I have seen in them, but in the one
Hunger, black pottage, and men hot to die,
Thereby to rid themselves of misery;
And what in th' other, but short capes, long beards,
Much wrangling in things needless to be known,
Wisdom in words, and only austere faces?
I will not be Agesilaus nor Solon.
Nero was there where he might honour win,
And honour hath he won, and brought from Greece
Those spoils which never Roman could obtain,
Spoils won by wit and trophies of his skill.

Nim. What a thing he makes it to be a minstrel!

Pop. I praise your wit, my lord, that choose such safe
Honours, safe spoils, won without dust or blood.

Nero. What, mock ye me, Poppæa?

Pop. Nay, in good faith, my lord, I speak in earnest.
I hate that heady and adventurous crew
That go to lose their own to purchase but
The breath of others and the common voice:

[1] See Virgil, Æn. VI. 805-6.—*Bullen.*

Them that will lose their hearing for a sound,
That by death only seek to get a living,
Make scars their beauty and count loss of limbs
The commendation of a proper man,
And so go halting to immortality;
Such fools I love worse than they do their lives.

Nero. But now, Poppæa, having laid apart
Our boastful spoils and ornaments of triumph,
Come we like Jove from Phlegra—

Pop. O giantlike comparison!

Nero. When after all his fires and murthering darts,
He comes to bath himself in Juno's eyes.
But thou, than wrangling Juno far more fair
Staining the evening beauty of the sky,
Or the day's brightness, shalt make glad thy Cæsar,
Shalt make him proud such beauties to enjoy.

[*Exeunt all except* NIMPHIDIUS.

Nim. Such beauties to enjoy were happiness
And a reward sufficient in itself,
Although no other end were aimèd at;
But I have other: 'tis not Poppæa's arms
Nor the short pleasures of a wanton bed
That can extinguish mine aspiring thirst
To Nero's crown. By her love I must climb;
Her bed is but a step unto his throne.
Already wise men laugh at him and hate him;
The people, though his minstrelsy doth please them,
They fear his cruelty, hate his executions,
Which his need still must force him to increase.
The multitude which cannot one thing long
Like or dislike, being cloyed with vanity,
Will hate their own delights; though wisdom do not,
Even weariness at length will give them eyes.
Thus I, by Nero's and Poppæa's favour
Raised to the envious height of second place,
May gain the first. Hate must strike Nero down,
Love make Nimphidius' way unto a crown. [*Exit*

SCENE IV.—*A Room in* SCÆVINUS' *House.*

Enter SENECA, SCÆVINUS, LUCAN, *and* FLAVIUS.

Scæv. His first beginning was his father's death;
His brother's poisoning and wife's bloody end
Came next; his mother's murther closed up all.
Yet hitherto he was but wicked when
The guilt of greater evils took away the shame
Of lesser, and did headlong thrust him forth
To be the scorn and laughter of the world.
Then first an emperor came upon the stage
And sung to please car-men and candle-sellers,
And learnt to act, to dance, to be a fencer,
And in despite o' the majesty of princes
He fell to wrestling, and was soiled with dust,
And tumbled on the earth with servile hands.

Sen. He sometimes trained was in better studies,
And had a childhood promised other hopes:
High fortunes like strong wines do try their vessels.
Was not the race and theatre big enough
To have enclosed thy follies here at home?
Oh, could not Rome and Italy contain
Thy shame, but thou must cross the seas to show it?

Scæv. And make them that were wont to see our consuls
With conquering eagles waving in the field,
Instead of that, behold an emperor dancing,
Playing o' th' stage, and what else but to name
Were infamy.

Luc. O Mummius![1] O Flaminius![2]
You whom your virtues have not made more famous
Than Nero's vices, you went o'er to Greece

[1] Lucius Mummius, the destroyer of Corinth; *vide* Vellieus Paterculus, i. 13.

[2] T. Quintius Flaminius, or Flamininus, the conqueror of Philip of Macedon, is here meant. *Vide* Livy, book XXXIII.; and compare Cicero, Pro Murena, 14, 31, where Flamininus and Mummius are spoken of together.

But t'other wars, and brought home other conquests.
You Corinth and Mycenæ overthrew,
And Perseus' self, the great Achilles' race,
O'ercame, having Minerva's stainèd temples
And your slain ancestors of Troy revenged.

Sen. They strove with kings and kinglike adversaries,
Were even in their enemies made happy,
The Macedonian courage tried of old
And the new greatness of the Syrian power:
But he, for Phillip and Antiochus,
Hath found more easy enemies to deal with,
Turpnus,[1] Pammenes,[2] and a rout of fiddlers.

Scæv. Withal, the begging minstrels by the way
He took along with him and forced to strive
That he might overcome, imagining
Himself immortal by such victories.

Flav. The men he carried over were enough
T'have put the Parthian to his second flight,
Or the proud Indian taught the Roman yoke.

Scæv. But they were Nero's men, like Nero armed
With lutes, and harps, and pipes, and fiddle-cases,
Soldiers to th' shadow trained and not the field.

Flav. Therefore they brought spoils of such soldiers worthy.

Luc. But to throw down the walls[3] and gates of Rome
To make an entrance for an hobby-horse,
To vaunt to th' people his ridiculous spoils,
To come with laurel and with olives crowned
For having been the worst of all the singers,
Is beyond patience.

Scæv. Ay, and anger too,
Had you but seen him in his chariot ride,
That chariot in which Augustus late
His triumphs o'er so many nations showed,

[1] *Vide* Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 20.—*Bullen.*
[2] *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XVI. 14.—*Bullen.*
[3] *Vide* Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 25; and also for the allusions in the following speech of Scævinus.

And with him in the same a minstrel placed
The while the people, running by his side,
'Hail thou Olympic Conqueror,' did cry,
'O hail thou Parthian!' and did fill the sky
With shame, and voices heaven would not have heard.
Sen. I saw't but turned away my eyes and ears,
Angry they should be privy to such sights.
Why do I stand relating of the story
Which in the doing had enough to grieve me?
Tell on an end the tale, you whom it pleaseth!
Me mine own sorrow stops from further speaking:
Nero, my love doth make thy fault and my grief greater.
[*Exit.*
Scæv. I do commend in Seneca this passion;
And yet methinks our country's misery
Doth at our hands crave something more than tears.
Luc. Pity, though't doth a kind affection show,
If it end there, our weakness makes us know.
Flav. Let children weep and men seek remedy.
Scæv. Stoutly, and like a soldier, Flavius!
Yet to seek remedy to a prince's ill
Seldom but it doth the physician kill.
Flav. And if it do, Scævinus, it shall take
But a devoted soul from Flavius,
Which to my country and the gods of Rome
Already sacred is and given away.
Death is no stranger unto me, I have
The doubtful hazard in twelve battles thrown;
My chance was life.
Luc. Why do we go to fight in Brittany
And end our lives under another sun,
Seek causeless dangers out? The German might
Enjoy his woods and his own alës drink,
Yet we walk safely in the streets of Rome:
Bonduca[1] hinders not but we might live:
Whom we do hurt them we call enemies,

[1] Boadicea; *vide* Tacitus, XIV. 31-37.

And those our lords that spoil and murder us
Nothing is hard to them that dare to die.
Scæv. This noble resolution in you, lords,
Heartens me to disclose some thoughts that I—
The matter is of weight and dangerous.
It is—
Luc. I see you fear us, Scævinus.
Scæv. Nay, nay, although the thing be full of fear.
Flav. Tell it to faithful ears what e'er it be.
Scæv. Faith, let it go, it will but trouble us,
Be hurtful to the speaker and the hearer.[1]
Luc. If our long friendship or the opinion——
Scæv. [*Aside.*] Why should I fear to tell them?
Why? Is he not a parricide, a player?
[*Aloud.*] Nay, Lucan, is he not thine enemy?
Hate not the heavens, as well as men, to see
That condemned head? And you, O righteous gods,
Whither soe'er you now are fled and will
No more look down upon th' oppressèd earth;
O severe anger of the highest gods!
And thou, stern power to whom the Greeks assign
Scourges, and swords to punish proud men's wrongs,
If you be more than names found out to awe us
And that we do not vainly build you altars,
Aid that just arm that's bent to execute
What you should do—
Luc. Stay, you're carried too much away, Scævinus.
Scæv. Why, what will you say for him? Hath[2] he not
Sought to suppress your poem, to bereave
That honour every tongue in duty paid it?
Nay, what can you say for him, hath he not
Broached his own wife's, a chaste wife's, breast and torn
With Scythian hands his mother's bowels up?
The inhospitable Caucasus is mild;

[1] Ought not this speech be spoken by Lucan, and the following now put down to Lucan, by Flavius?
[2] *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XV. 49.—*Bullen.*

The Moor, that in the boiling desert seeks
With blood of strangers to imbrue his jaws,
Upbraids the Roman now with barbarousness.
Luc. You are too earnest.
I neither can, nor will I speak for him,
And though he sought my learnèd pains to wrong,
I hate him not for that, my verse shall live
When Nero's body shall be thrown in Tiber,
And times to come shall bless those wicked arms.[1]
I love th' unnatural wounds from whence did flow
Another Cirrha, a new Helicon.
I hate him that he is Rome's enemy,
An enemy to virtue, sits on high
To shame the seat; and in that hate my life
And blood I'll mingle on the earth with yours.
Flav. My deeds, Scævinus, shall speak my conser
Scæv. 'Tis answered as I looked for, noble poet,
Worthy the double laurel. Flavius,
Good luck, I see, doth virtuous meanings aid,
And therefore have the heavens forborne their duties
To grace our swords with glorious blood of tyrants.
[*Exeunt.*

[1] The wars which Lucan celebrated.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.—*The Garden of* NERO'S *Palace.*

Enter PETRONIUS.

PET. Here waits Poppæa her Nimphidius' coming,
And hath this garden and green walks chose out
To bless them with more pleasures than their own.
Not only arras hangings and silk beds
Are guilty of the faults we blame them for:
Somewhat these arbours and yon trees do know,
Whilst your kind shades you to these night sports show.
Night sports? Faith, they are done in open day
And the sun seeth and envieth their play.
Hither have I love-sick Antonius brought
And thrust him on occasion so long sought;
Showed him the empress in a thicket by,
Her love's approach waiting with greedy eye;
And told him, if he ever meant to prove
The doubtful issue of his hopeful love,
This is the place and time wherein to try it;
Women will hear the suit that will deny it.
The suit's not hard that she comes for to take;
Who, hot in lust of men, doth difference make?

At last forth, willing, to her did he pace:
Arm him, Priapus, with thy powerful mace.
But see, they coming are; how they agree
Here will I harken; shroud me, gentle tree.
[*Hides himself.*

Enter POPPÆA *and* ANTONIUS.

Ant. Seek not to grieve that heart which is thine own.
In love's sweet fires let heat of rage burn out;
These brows could never yet to wrinkle learn,
Nor anger out of such fair eyes look forth.
Pop. You may solicit your presumptuous suits,
You duty may, and shame too, lay aside,
Disturb my privacy, and I forsooth
Must be afeared even to be angry at you!
Ant. What shame is't to be mastered by such beauty?
Who but to serve you comes, how wants he duty?
Or if it be a shame, the shame is yours,
The fault is only in your eyes, they drew me;
'Cause you were lovely therefore did I love.
Oh! if to love you anger you so much,
You should not have such cheeks nor lips to touch,
You should not have your snow nor coral spied.
If you but look on us in vain you chide;
We must not see your face, nor hear your speech:
Now, whilst you Love forbid, you Love do teach.
Pet. He doth better than I thought he would. [*Aside.*
Pop. I will not learn my beauty's worth of you;
I know you neither are the first nor greatest
Whom it hath moved: he whom the world obeys
Is feared with anger of my threatening eyes.
It is for you afar off to adore it,
And not to reach at it with saucy hands.
Fear is the love that's due to gods and princes.
Pet. All this is but to edge his appetite. [*Aside.*
Ant. Oh! do not see thy fair in that false glass

Of outward difference ; look into my heart,
There shalt thou see thyself enthronèd set
In greater majesty than all the pomp
Of Rome or Nero. 'Tis not the crouching awe
And ceremony with which we flatter princes
That can to Love's true duties be compared.

Pop. Sir, let me go or I'll make known your love
To them that shall requite it but with hate.

Pet. [*Aside.*] On ! on ! Thou hast the goal, the fort is beaten :
Women are won when they begin to threaten.

Ant. Your nobleness doth warrant me from that,
Nor need you others' help to punish me
Who by your forehead am condemned or free.
They that to be revenged do bend their mind
Seek always recompence in that same kind
The wrong was done them ; love was mine offence,
In that revenge, in that seek recompence.

Pop. Further to answer will still cause replies,
And those as ill do please me as yourself.
If you'll an answer take that's brief and true,
I hate myself if I be loved of you. [*Exit.*

Pet. What, gone ? But she will come again sure. No !
It passeth clean my cunning, all my rules ;
For women's wantonness there is no rule.
To take her in the itching of her lust,
A proper young man putting forth himself !
Why, fate ! there's fate and hidden providence
In cod-piece matters.[1]

Ant. O unhappy man !
What comfort have I now, Petronius ?

Pet. Counsel yourself, I'll teach no more but learn

[1] In the MS., against this passage, is written in the margin the following quotation : —

Fatû est in partibus illis
Quas sinus abscondit.

The passage is from Juvenal, IX. 32–33, and runs thus : —

Fata, regunt homines ; fatum est et partibus illis
Quas sinus abscondit.

Ant. This comfort yet, he shall not so escape
Who causeth my disgrace, Nimphidius,
Whom had I here—Well, for my true-heart's love,
I see she hates me. And shall I love one
That hates me, and bestows what I deserve
Upon my rival? No, farewell Poppæa,
Farewell Poppæa and farewell all love;
Yet thus much shall it still prevail in me
That I will hate Nimphidius for thee.

Pet. Farewell to her, to my Enanthe welcome,
Who now will to my burning kisses stoop,
Now with an easy cruelty deny
That which she, rather than the asker, would
Have forcèd from her than begin[1] herself.
Their loves that list upon great ladies set,
I still will love the wench that I can get. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE II.—*A Room in the Golden House of* NERO.

Enter NERO, TIGELLINUS, EPAPHRODITUS, *and* NEOPHILUS.

Nero. Tigellinus, said the villain Proculus[2]
I was thrown down in running?

Tig. My lord, he said that you were crowned for that
You could not do.

Nero. For that I could not do?
Why, Elis saw me do't, and do't to th' wonder
Of all the judges and the lookers on;
And yet to see—A villain! Could not do't?

[1] The 4tos read "begins," the MS. "beginnes." I adopt Mr. Bullen's emendation.

[2] Proculus has been put here, by a slip of the memory, for Plautus: see note p. 29. Tacitus in the Annals mentions two persons of the name of Proculus,—Cervarius Proculus, XV. 50, and Volusius Proculus, XV. 51 and 57, but it cannot be either of these.

Who did it better? I warrant you he said
I from my chariot fell against my will.
Tig. He said, my lord, you were thrown out of it,
All crushed, and maimed, and almost bruised to death.
Nero. Malicious rogue! when I fell willingly
To show of purpose with what little hurt
Might a good driver bear a forcèd fall.
How say'st thou, Tigellinus? I am sure
Thou hast in driving as much skill as he.
Tig. My lord, you greater cunning showed in falling
Than had you sat.
Nero. I know I did. I bruisèd in my fall?
Hurt? I protest, I felt no grief in it.
Go, Tigellinus, fetch the villain's head;
This makes me see his heart in other things.
Fetch me his head; he ne'er shall speak again!
[*Exit* TIGELLINUS.
What do we princes differ from the dirt
And baseness of the common multitude
If to the scorn of each malicious tongue
We subject are? For that I had no skill,[1]
Not he that his far-famèd daughter set
A prize to victory, and had been crowned
With thirteen suitors' deaths till he at length
By fate of gods and servants' treason fell,
Shoulder-pieced Pelops, glorying in his spoils,
Could with more skill his coupled horses guide.
Even as a barque that through the moving flood
Her linen wings and the forced air do bear;
The billows foam, she smoothly cuts them through:
So past my burning axle-tree along,
The people follow with their eyes and voice,
And now the wind doth see itself outrun
And the clouds wonder to be left behind,
Whilst the void air is filled with shouts and triumphs,

[1] *i.e.* "As for his saying that I had no skill."—*Bullein.*

And Nero's name doth beat the brazen sky ;[1]
Jupiter envying, loath doth hear my praise :
Then their green bows and crowns of olive wreaths,
The conqueror's praise, they give me as my due ;
And yet this rogue saith, No, we have no skill.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lord, the stage and all the furniture—
Nero. I have no skill to drive a chariot !
Had he but robbed me, broke my treasury :
The Red Sea's mine, mine are the Indian stones,
The world's mine own ; then cannot I be robbed ?
But spitefully to undermine my fame,
To take away my art ! he would my life
As well, no doubt, could he tell how.

Re-enter TIGELLINUS, *with* PROCULUS' *head.*

Neoph. My lord,
Tigellinus is back come with Proculus' head. [*Strikes him.*
Nero. I cry thee mercy, good Neophilus ;
Give him five hundred sesterces for amends.
Hast brought him, Tigellinus ?
Tig. Here's his head, my lord.
Nero. His tongue had been enough.
Tig. I did as you commanded me, my lord.
Nero. Thou told'st not me, though, he had such a nose ![2]
Now are you quiet and have quieted me :
This 'tis to be commander of the world.
Let them extol weak pity that do need it,
Let men cry to have law and justice done
And tell their griefs to heaven that hears them not :

[1] From here to the end of Piso's speech, "So done it names the action," line 10, p. 35, in the next Scene, is wanting in the MS.

[2] Dion Cassius, B. 14, reports this brutal gibe of Nero's ; Rubellius Plautus was the luckless victim.—*Bullen. Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XIV. 57.

Kings must upon the people's headless corses
Walk to security and ease of mind.
Why, what have we to do with th' airy names
That old age and philosophers found out,
Of justice and ne'er certain equity?
The gods revenge themselves and so will we:
Where right is scant, authority's o'erthrown;
We have a high prerogative above it.
Slaves may do what is right, we what we please:
The people will repine and think it ill,
But they must bear, and praise too, what we will.

Enter CORNUTUS.[1]

Neoph. My lord, Cornutus whom you sent for's come.

Nero. Welcome, good Cornutus.
Are all things ready for the stage,
As I gave charge?

Corn. They only stay your coming.

Nero. Cornutus, I must act to-day Orestes.

Corn. [*Aside*] You have done that already, and too truly.

Nero. And when our scene is done, I mean besides
To read some compositions of mine own,
Which, for the great opinion I myself
And Rome in general of thy judgment hath,
Before I publish them, I'll show them thee.

Corn. My lord, my disabilities—

Nero. I know thy modesty:
I'll only show thee now my work's beginning.
Go see, Epaphroditus,
Music made ready; I will sing to-day.

[*Exit* EPAPHRODITUS.

Cornutus, I pray thee come near
And let me hear thy judgment in my pains.

[1] Annæus Cornutus was the master of Persius and a Stoic philosopher and a tragic poet. The incidents of this Scene with Cornutus are very closely taken from Dion Cassius.

I would have thee more familiar, good Cornutus;
Nero doth prize desert, and more esteems
Them that in knowledge second him, than power.
Mark with what style and state my work begins.

Corn. Might not my interruption offend,
What's your work's name, my lord; what write you of?

Nero. I mean to write the deeds of all the Romans.

Corn. Of all the Romans! a huge argument.

Nero. I have not yet bethought me of a title. [*Reads.*
"You enthral powers which the wide fortunes doom
Of empire-crowned seven-mountain-seated Rome
Full blown, inspire me with Machlæan[1] rage
That I may bellow out Rome's prentisage;
As when the Mænades do fill their drums[2]
And crooked horns with Mimallonean hums
And Evion do ingeminate a round,
Which reparable Echo doth resound."
How dost thou like our muse's pains, Cornutus?

Corn. The verses have more in them than I see:
Your work, my lord, I doubt will be too long.

Nero. Too long?

Tig. Too long?

Corn. Ay, if you write the deeds of all the Romans.
How many books think you t' include it in?

Nero. I think to write about four hundred books.

Corn. Four hundred! Why, my lord, they'll ne'er be read.[3]

Nero. Ah?

Tig. Why, he whom you esteem so much, Chrysippus,
Wrote many more.

[1] Machlæan, a word coined from μάχλος (*i.e.* libidinosus).—*Bullen.*

[2] This and the next three lines are imitated from Persius, i. 99–102. These four lines are said to be taken from a poem of Nero's called "Bacchæ" The Bacchantes are called Mimallones, from Mimas, a mountain in Ionia; Bassareus, an epithet of Bacchus, from the fox's skin in which he is represented: by the "vitulus," Pentheus is intended; and the other images are quite as far-fetched. Persius' contempt of these verses, i. 104–106, is quite borne out by Tacitus Ann. XIV. 16, and Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 52.

[3] *Vide* Dion Cassius, LXII B. 29.—*Bullen.*

Corn. But they were profitable to common life,
And did men honesty and wisdom teach.
Nero. Tigellinus! [*Exeunt* NERO *and* TIGELLINUS.
Corn. See with what earnestness he craved my judgement,
And now he freely hath it, how it likes him.
Neoph. The prince is angry, and his fall is near;
Let us begone lest we partake his ruins.
[*Exeunt all except* CORNUTUS.
Corn. What should I do at court? I cannot lie.
Why didst thou call me, Nero, from my book?
Didst thou for flattery of Cornutus look?
No, let those purple fellows that stand by thee,
That admire show and things that thou canst give,
Leave to please truth and virtue, to please thee.
Nero, there is nothing in thy power Cornutus
Doth wish or fear.

Re-enter TIGELLINUS.

Tig. 'Tis Nero's pleasure that you straight depart
To Gyaros,[1] and there remain confined:
Thus he out of his princely clemency,
Hath death, your due, turned but to banishment.
Corn. Why, Tigellinus?
Tig. I have done: upon your peril go or stay. [*Exit*
Corn. And why should death, or banishment be due
For speaking that which was required, my thought?
Oh, why do princes love to be deceived,
And even do force abuses on themselves?
Their ears are so with pleasing speech beguiled
That truth they malice, flattery truth account,
And their own soul and understanding lost,
Go, what they are, to seek in other men.
Alas! weak prince, how hast thou punished me
To banish me from thee? Oh, let me go

[1] An island in the Ægæan Sea, to the east of Delos. The Romans were accustomed to send their most illustrious exiles there. *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. IV. 30.

And dwell in Taurus, dwell in Ethiope,
So that I do not dwell at Rome with thee.
The farther still I go from hence, I know,
The farther I leave shame and vice behind.
Where can I go but I shall see thee, sun;
And heaven will be as near me still as here?
Can they so far a knowing soul exile
That her own roof she sees not o'er her head? [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* SCÆVINUS' *House.*

Enter PISO, SCÆVINUS, LUCAN, *and* FLAVIUS.

Piso. Noble gentlemen, what thanks, what recompense
Shall he give you that give to him the world?
One life to them that must so many venture,
And that the worst of all, is too mean pay;
Yet can I give no more. Take that, bestow it
Upon your service.

Luc. O Piso, that vouchsafest
To grace our headless party with thy name,
Whom having our conductor, we need not
Have feared to go against the well tried valour
Of Julius or stayedness of Augustus,
Much less the shame and womanhood of Nero.
When we had once given out that our pretences
Were all for thee, our end to make thee prince,
They thronging came to give their names, men, women,
Gentlemen, people, soldiers, senators;[1]
The camp and city grew ashamed that Nero
And Piso should be offered them together.

Scæv. We seek not now as in the happy days
O' th' commonwealth they did, for liberty;

[1] *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XV. 48.—*Bullen.*

O you dear ashes, Cassius and Brutus,
That was with you entombed, there let it rest.
We are contented with the galling yoke
If they will only leave us necks to bear it:
We seek no longer freedom, we seek life;
At least, not to be murdered; let us die
On enemies' swords. Shall we, whom neither
The Median bow, nor Macedonian spear,
Nor the fierce Gaul, nor painted Briton could
Subdue, lay down our necks to tyrant's axe?
Why do we talk of virtue that obey
Weakness and vice?

Piso. Have patience, good Scævinus.

Luc. Weakness and servile government we hitherto
Obeyèd have, which, that we may no longer,
We have our lives and fortunes now set up,
And have our cause with Piso's credit strengthened.

Flav. Which makes it doubtful whether love to him,
Or Nero's hatred, hath drawn more to us.

Piso. I see the good things you have of me, lords.
Let's now proceed to th' purpose of our meeting:
I pray you take your places.
Let's have some paper brought.

Scæv. Who's within?

Enter MILICHUS.

Mil. My lord?

Scæv. Some ink and paper.

[*Exit* MILICHUS *and re-enter with ink and paper.*

Flav. Who's that, Scævinus?

Scæv. It is my freedman, Milichus.

Luc. Is he trusty?

Scæv. Ay, for as great matters as we are about.

Piso. And those are great ones.

Luc. I ask not that we mean to need his trust;
Gain hath great sovereignty o'er servile minds.

Scæv. Oh, but my benefits have bound him to me.
I from a bondman have his state not only
Advanced to freedom, but to wealth and credit.
Piso. Milichus, wait i' th' next chamber till we call.
[MILICHUS *retires.*
The thing determined on, our meeting now,[1]
Is of the means and place, due circumstance
As to the doing of things, 'tis required;
So done it names the action.
Mil. [*Aside*] I wonder
What makes this new resort to haunt our house?
When wonted Lucius[2] Piso to come hither,
Or Lucan, when so oft as now of late?
Piso. And since the field and open show of arms
Dislike you, and that for the general good
You mean to end all stirs in end of him;
That, as the ground, must first be thought upon.
Mil. [*Aside*] Besides, this coming cannot be for form
Or visitation; they go aside
And have long conferences by themselves.
Luc. Piso, his coming to your house at Baiæ[3]
To bathe and banquet will fit means afford,
Amidst his cups to end his hated life:
Let him die drunk that ne'er lived soberly.
Piso. Oh, be it far that I should stain my table
And gods of hospitality with blood!
Let not our cause, now innocent, be soiled
With such a plot, nor Piso's name made hateful.
What place can better fit our action
Than his own house, that boundless envied heap
Built with the spoils and blood of citizens,
That hath taken up the city, left no room
For Rome to stand on? Romans, get you gone

[1] *i.e.* "Since now we have met here, it is required that the thing to be determined on," etc.
[2] Both the 4tos and the MS. read "Lucius" instead of "Caius" *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XV. 48.
[3] See Tacitus, Ann. XV. 52.

And dwell at Veii, if that Veii too
This house o'errun not.[1]

Luc. But 'twill be hard to do it in his house,
And harder to escape, being done.

Piso. Not so:
Rufus, the captain of the guard, 's with us,
And divers others o' th' prætorian band
Already made;[2] many, though unacquainted
With our intents, have had disgrace and wrongs
Which grieve them still; most will be glad of change,
And even they that loved him best, when once
They see him gone, will smile o' th' coming times,
Let go things past and look to their own safety:
Besides th' astonishment and fear will be
So great, so sudden, that 'twill hinder them
From doing anything.

Mil. [*Aside*] No private business can concern them all;
Their countenances are troubled and look sad,
Doubt and importance in their face is read.

Luc. Yet still I think it were
Safer t' attempt him private and alone.

Flav. But 'twill not carry that opinion with it;
'Twill seem more foul, and come from private malice.
Brutus and they, to right the common cause,
Did choose a public place.

Scæv. Our deed is honest, why should it seek corners?

[1] Against this passage, in the margin of the MS. is written:—

Veias migrat colen . . .
Si non et Veius occupat illa domus.

It is misquoted from Suetonius. Perhaps it will be as well to give the context, Vit. Ner. 39:—

"Mirum, et vel præcipue notabile inter hæc fuerit, nihil eum patientius, quam maledicta et convincia hominum, talisse; neque in ullos leniorem, quam qui se dictis aut carminibus lacessissent exstitisse. Multa Græce Latineque proscripta aut vulgata sunt, sicut illa:—

"Roma domus fiet: Veios migrate, Quirites,
Si non et Veios occupat ista domus."

[2] *i.e.* "And he (Rufus) has already made divers others of the Prætorian band with us." Compare Tacitus, Ann. XV. 50.

'Tis for the public done, let them behold it;
Let me have them as witness of my truth
And love of th' commonwealth. The danger's greater,
So is the glory. Why should our pale counsels
Tend whither fear, rather than virtue, calls them?
I do not like these cold considerings:
First let our thoughts look up to what is honest,
Next to what's safe. If danger may deter us,
Nothing that's great or good shall e'er be done;
And when we first gave hands upon this deed,
To th' common safety we our own gave up.
Let no man venture on a prince's death,
How bad soever, with belief to 'scape;
Despair must be our hope, fame our reward.
To make the general liking to concur
With others' were even to strike him in his shame,
Or, as he thinks, his glory, on the stage,
And so to truly make a tragedy
When all the people cannot choose but clap
So sweet a close; and 'twill not Cæsar be
That will be slain, a Roman prince;
'Twill be Alcmæon or blind Œdipus.

Mil. [*Aside*] And if it be of public matters, 'tis not
Like to be talk or idle fault-finding,
On which the cowardly only spend their wisdom:
These are all men of action and of spirit,
And dare perform what they determine on.

Luc. What think you of Poppæa, Tigellinus,
And th' other odious instruments of court?
Were it not best at once to rid them all?

Scæv. In Cæsar's ruin Anthony was spared,
Let not our cause with needless blood be stained.
One only moved, the change will not appear;
When too much license given to the sword,
Though against ill, will make even good men fear.
Besides, things settled, you at pleasure may
By law and public judgment have them rid.

Mil. [*Aside*] And if it be but talk o' th' state 'tis treason.
Like it they cannot, that they cannot do;
If seek to mend it and remove the prince,
That's highest treason: change his counsellors,
That's alteration of the government,
The common cloak that treason's muffled in:
If laying force aside, to seek by suit
And fair petition t' have the state reformed,
That's tutoring the prince and takes away
Th' one his person, this his sovereignty.
Barely in private talk to show dislike
Of what is done is dangerous, therefore the action
Mislike you, 'cause the doer likes you not.
Men are not fit to live i' th' state they hate.

Piso. Though we would all have that employment sought,
Yet, since your worthy forwardness, Scævinus,
Prevents us and so nobly begs for danger,
Be this the chosen hand to do the deed;
The fortune of the empire speed your sword.

Scæv. Virtue and heaven speed it, O you home-born
Gods of our country, Romulus and Vesta,
That Tuscan Tiber and Rome's towers defend,
Forbid not yet at length a happy end
To former evils; let this hand revenge
The wrongèd world; enough we now have suffered

[*Exeunt all except* MILICHUS.

Mil. [*Coming forward*]. Tush, all this long consulting's more than words,
It ends not there; they've some attempt, some plot
Against the state: well, I'll observe it farther,
And if I find it, make my profit of it. [*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Golden House of* NERO.

Enter POPPÆA.

POP. I looked Nimphidius would have
come e'er this.
Makes he no greater haste to our
embraces,
Or doth the easiness abate his edge,
Or seem we not as fair still as we did?
Or is he so with Nero's playing won
That he before Poppæa doth prefer it?
Or doth he think to have occasion still,
Still to have time to wait on our stol'n meetings?
[*Enter* NIMPHIDIUS.
But see, his presence now doth end those doubts.
What is't, Nimphidius, hath so long detained you?

Nim. Faith, lady, causes strong enough,
High walls, barred doors, and guards of armèd men.

Pop. Were you imprisoned then, as you were going
To the theatre?

Nim. Not in my going, lady,
But in the theatre I was imprisoned.
For after he was once upon the stage
The gates were more severely looked into
Than at a town besieged; no man, no cause
Was current, no, nor passant. At other sights

The strife is only to get in, but here
The stir was all in getting out again.
Had we not been kept to it so, I think,
'Twould ne'er have been so tedious; though I know
'Twas hard to judge whether his doing of it
Were more absurd than 'twas for him to do it.
But when we once were forced to be spectators,
Compelled to that which should have been a pleasure,
We could no longer bear the tediousness;
No pain so irksome as a forced delight.
Some fell down dead, or seemed at least to do so,
Under that colour to be carried forth.
Then death first pleasured men, the shape all fear
Was put on gladly; some climbed o'er the walls
And so, by falling, caught in earnest that
Which th' other did dissemble. There were women
That, being not able to entreat the guard
To let them pass the gates, were brought to bed
Amidst the throngs of men, and made Lucina
Blush to see that unwonted company.[1]

Pop. If 'twere so straightly kept how gat you forth?

Nim. Faith, lady, I came pretending haste
In place and countenance, told them I was sent
For things by th' prince forgot about the scene,
Which both my credit made them to believe,
And Nero newly whispered me before.
Thus did I pass the gates; the danger, lady,
I have not yet escaped.

Pop. What danger mean you?

Nim. The danger of his anger when he knows
How I thus shrank away; for there stood knaves
That put down in their tables all that stirred,
And marked in each their cheerfulness or sadness.

Pop. I warrant I'll excuse you; but I pray
Let's be a little better for your sight.

[1] Compare Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 23; and Tacitus, Ann. XVI 5. —*Bullen.*

How did our princely husband act Orestes?
Did he not wish again his mother living?
Her death would add great life unto his part.
But come, I pray; the story of your sight.

Nim. Oh, do not drive me to those hateful pains.
Lady, I was too much in seeing vexed;
Let it not be redoubled in the telling.
I now am well and hear, my ears set free;
Oh, be merciful, do not bring me back
Unto my prison; at least free yourself.
It will not pass away, but stay the time;
Wreak out the hours in length. Oh, give me leave,
As one that wearied with the toil at sea
And now on wishèd shore hath firmed his foot;
He looks about and glads his thoughts and eyes
With sight o' th' green-clothed ground and leafy trees,
Of flowers that beg more than the looking on,
And likes these other waters' narrow shores:
So let me lay my weariness in these arms,
Nothing but kisses to this mouth discourse,
My thoughts be compassed in those circled eyes,
Eyes on no object look but on these cheeks;
Blessed be my hands with touching such round breasts
Whiter and softer than the down of swans:
Let me of thee and of thy beauty's glory
An endless tell, but never wearying story. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the Golden House of* NERO

Enter NERO, EPAPHRODITUS, *and* NEOPHILUS.

Nero. Come, sirs, i'faith, how did you like my acting?
What? was't not as you looked for?

Epaph. Yes, my lord, and much beyond.

Nero. Did I not do it to the life?

Epaph. The very doing never was so lively
As was this counterfeiting.

Nero. And when I came
To th' point of Agripp[1]——Clytæmnestra's death,
Did it not move the feeling auditory?

Epaph. They had been stones whom that could not have moved.

Nero. Did not my voice hold out well to the end,
And served me afterwards afresh to sing with?

Neoph. We know Apollo cannot match your voice.

Epaph. By Jove! I think you are the god himself
Come from above to show your hidden arts
And fill us men with wonder of your skill.

Nero. Nay, faith, speak truly, do not flatter me;
I know you need not; flattery's but where
Desert is mean.

Epaph. I swear by thee, O Cæsar,
Than whom no power of heaven I honour more,
No mortal voice can pass or equal thine.

Nero. They tell of Orpheus, when he took his lute
And moved the noble ivory with his touch,
Hebrus stood still, Pangæus bowed his head,
Ossa then first shook off his snow and came
To listen to the movings of his song;
The gentle poplar took the bay along,
And called the pine down from the mountain seat;
The virgin bay, although the arts she hates
O' th' delphic god, was with his voice o'ercome:
He his twice-lost Eurydice bewails
And Proserpine's vain gifts, and makes the shores
And hollow caves of forests, now untreed,
Bear his griefs company, and all things teacheth
His lost love's name; then water, air, and ground,
"Eurydice, Eurydice," resound.[2]

[1] Both Tacitus, Ann. XIV. 10, and Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 34., tell us how Nero was haunted by the remembrance of his mother, Agrippina's murder.

[2] Compare the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, Virgil, Geor. IV.

These are bold tales, of which the Greeks have store;
But if he could from hell once more return
And would compare his hand and voice with mine,
Ay, though himself were judge, he then should see
How much the Latin stains[1] the Thracian lyre.
I oft have walked by Tiber's flow'ry banks
And heard the swan sing her own epitaph;
When she heard me she held her peace and died.
Let others raise from earthly things their praise;
Heaven hath stood still to hear my happy airs,
And ceased th' eternal music of the spheres
To mark my voice and mend their tunes by mine.

Neoph. O divine voice!

Epaph. Happy are they that hear it.

Enter TIGELLINUS.

Nero. But here comes Tigellinus; 'come, thy bill.
Are there so many? I see I have enemies.

Epaph. Hath he put Caius in? I saw him frown.

Neoph. And in the midst o' th' Emperor's action
Gallus laughed out, and as, I think, in scorn.

Nero. Vespasian too asleep! was he so drowsy?
Well, he shall sleep the iron sleep of death.[2]
And did Thrasea look so sourly on us?

Tig. He never smiled, my lord, nor would vouchsafe
With one applaause to grace your action.

Nero. Our action needed not be graced by him:
He's our old enemy and still maligns us.
'Twill have an end, nay it shall have an end!
Why, I have been too pitiful, too remiss;
My easiness is laughed at and contemned:
But I will change it; not as heretofore
By singling out them, one by one, to death,
Each common man can such revenges have;
A prince's anger must lay desolate

[1] *i.e.* Casts a slur upon.
[2] Compare Tacitus, Ann. XVI. 5.—*Bullen.*

Cities, kingdoms consume, root up mankind.
Oh, could I live to see the general end,
Behold the world enwrapped in funeral flames,
Whenas the sun shall lend his beams to burn
What he before brought forth, and water serve
Not to extinguish but to nurse the fire;
Then, like the salamander,[1] bathing me
In the last ashes of all mortal things,
Let me give up this breath. Priam was happy,
Happy indeed; he saw his Troy burnt
And Ilion lie in heaps, whilst thy pure streams,
Divine Scamander, did run Phrygian blood,
And heard the pleasant cries of Trojan mothers.
Could I see Rome so!

Tig. Your majesty may easily,
Without this trouble to your sacred mind.[2]

Nero. What may I easily do? kill him, or thee?
How may I rid you all? Where is the man
That will all others end and last himself?
Oh, that I had thy thunder in my hand,
Thou idle rover, I'd not shoot at trees
And spend in woods my unregarded vengeance;
I'd shiver them down upon their guilty roofs
And fill the streets with bloody burials.
But 'tis not heaven can give me what I seek;
To you, you hated kingdoms of the night,
You severe powers that not like those above,
Will with fair words or children's cries be won,
That have a style beyond that heaven is proud of,
Deriving not from art a maker's name
But in destruction power and terror show,
To you I fly for succour; you whose dwellings
For torments are belied, must give me ease.
Furies, lend me your fires! No, they are here;
They must be other fires, material brands
That must the burning of my heat allay.

[1] *Vide* Sir T. Browne's "Vulgar Errors," Book III., Chap. XIV.
[2] Compare Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 38.

I bring to you no rude unpractised hands,
Already do they reek with mothers' blood;
Tush, that's but innocent to what now I mean.
Alas, what evil could those years commit!
The world in this shall see my settled wit. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE III.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter SENECA *and* PETRONIUS.

Sen. Petronius, you were at the theatre?

Pet. Seneca, I was and saw your kingly pupil
In ministrel's habit stand before the judges,
Bowing those hands which the world's sceptre hold,
And with great awe and reverence beseeching
Indifferent hearing and an equal doom:
Then Cæsar doubted first to be o'erborne,
And so he joined himself to th' other singers
And straightly all the laws o' th' stage observed,
As not, though weary, to sit down, not spit,
Not wipe his sweat off but with what he wore.[1]
Mean time how would he eye his adversaries;
How he would seek t'have all they did disgraced,
Traduce them privily, openly rail at them;
And them he could not conquer so, he would
Corrupt with money to do worse than he.
This was his singing part; his acting now.

Sen. Nay, come end here for I have heard enough;
I have a fiddler heard him, let me not
See him a player, nor the fearful voice
Of Rome's great monach now command in jest,——
Our prince be Agamemnon in a play!

Pet. Why, Seneca, 'tis better in play[2]
Be Agamemnon than himself indeed.

[1] Compare Tacitus, Ann. XVI. 4.—*Bullen.*
[2] Charles Lamb quotes this speech in his "Specimens."

How oft, with danger of the field beset,
Or with home's mutinies would he unbe
Himself; or, over cruel altars[1] weeping,
Wish that with putting off a vizard he
Might his true inward sorrow lay aside:
The shows of things are better than themselves.
How doth it stir this airy part in us
To hear our poets tell imagined fights
And the strange blows that feignèd courage gives!
When I Achilles hear upon the stage
Speak honour and the greatness of his soul,
Methinks, I too could on a Phrygian spear
Run boldly and make tales for after times;
But when we come to act it in the deed
Death mars this bravery, and the ugly fears
Of th' other world sit on the proudest brow,
And boasting valour looseth his red cheek.

Enter two Romans.

1st Rom. Fire, fire! help, we burn!

2nd Rom. Fire, water! fire, help! fire!

Sen. Fire! Where?

Pet. Where? what fire?

1st Rom. O round about, here, there, on every side
The girdling flame doth with unkind embraces
Compass the city.

Pet. How came this fire? by whom?

Sen. Was't chanced or purposed?

Pet. Why is't not quenched?

1st Rom. Alas, there are many there with weapons,
And whether it be for prey or by command
They hinder, nay, they throw on fire-brands.

Enter ANTONIUS.

Ant. The fire increaseth and will not be stayed,
But like a stream[2] that tumbling from a hill,

[1] The MS. reads "waters."
[2] The simile is from Virgil, Æn. II 304–308.—*Bullen*

O'erwhelms the fields, o'erwhelms the hopeful toil
O' th' husbandman, and headlong bears the woods;
The unweeting shepherd on a rock afar
Amazèd hears the fearful noise; so here
Danger and terror strive which shall exceed.
Some cry and yet are well; some are killed silent;
Some kindly run to help their neighbour's house,
The whilst their own's afire;[1] some save their goods
And leave their dearer pledges in the flame:
One takes his little sons with trembling hands;
T'other his house-god saves, which could not him;
All bann the doer, and with wishes kill
Their absent murderer.

Pet. What, are the Gauls returned?
Doth Brennus brandish fire-brands again?

Sen. What can heaven now unto our suff'rings add?

Enter another Roman.

3rd Rom. [2] Oh, all goes down, Rome falleth to the [root;
The wind's aloft, the conquering flame turns all
Into itself, nor do the gods escape;
Alcides burns, Jupiter Stator burns;
The altar now is made a sacrifice,
And Vesta mourns to see her virgin fires
Mingle with profane ashes.

Sen. Heaven, hast thou set this end to Roman greatness?
Were the world's spoils for this to Rome divided
To make but our fires bigger?
You gods, whose anger made us great, grant yet
Some change in misery! We beg not now
To have our consuls tread on Asian kings,
Or spurn the quivered Susa at their feet;
This we have had before: we beg to live,
At least not thus to die. Let Cannæ come,

[1] Compare Dion Cassius, Ξ B. 16.—*Bullen.*
[2] This line, in the MS., is spoken by Seneca.

Let Allia's waters turn again to blood;
To these will any miseries be light.

Pet. Why with false auguries have we been deceived?
Why was our empire told us should endure
With sun and moon in time, in brightness pass them,
And that one end should be for th' world and it?
What, can celestial godheads double too?

Sen. O Rome, the envy late
But now the pity of the world! the Getes,
The men of Colchis at thy sufferings grieve;
The shaggy dweller in the Scythian rocks,
The Mosch[1] condemnèd to perpetual snows
That never wept at kindred's burials,
Suffers with thee and feels his heart to soften.
Oh, should the Parthian hear these miseries
He would, his bow and native hate apart,
Sit down with us and lend an enemy's tear
To grace the funeral fires of ending Rome. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The House of* MÆCENAS: *the Street below.*

Soft music. Enter NERO *above with a timbrel.*

Nero. Ay! now my Troy looks beauteous in her flames;
The Tyrrhene seas are bright with Roman fires,
Whilst the amazèd mariner afar,
Gazing on th' unknown light, wonders what star
Heaven hath begot to ease the agèd moon.
When Pyrrhus, striding o'er the cinders, stood
On ground where Troy late was, and with his eye
Measured the height of what he had thrown down,

[1] The 4tos read "most," and in the MS. there is a blank; so I have followed Mr. Bullen's reading, who adds:—"A tribe named the 'Moschi' (of whom mention is made in Herodotus), dwelt a little to the south of the Colchians."

A city great in people and in power,
Walls built with hands of gods, he now forgives
The ten-years' siege and thinks his wounds well healed,
Bathed in the blood of Priam's fifty sons.
Yet am not I appeased; I must see more
Than towers and columns tumble to the ground:
'Twas not the high-built walls and guiltless stones
That Nero did provoke; themselves must be the wood
To feed this fire or quench it with their blood.

Enter a Woman *with a burnt child.*

Wom. O my dear infant! O my child, my child!
Unhappy comfort of my nine months' pains;
And did I bear thee only for the fire?
Was I to that end made a mother?

Nero. [1] Ay, now begins the scene that I would have.

Enter a Man *bearing a dead body.*

Man. O father, speak yet! No, the merciless blow
Hath all bereft, speech, motion, sense, and life.

Wom. O beauteous innocence, whiteness ill blacked,
How to be made a coal could'st thou deserve?

Man. O rev'rend wrinkles, well becoming paleness,
Why hath death now life's colours given thee
And mocked thee with the beauties of fresh youth?

Wom. Why wert thou given me to be ta'en away
So soon, or could not heaven tell how to punish
But first by blessing me?

Man. Why were thy years
Lengthened so long to be cut off untimely?

Nero. Play on, play on, and fill the golden skies
With cries and pity; with your blood, men's eyes.[2]

Wom. Where are thy flattering smiles, thy pretty kisses
And arms that wont to wreath about my neck?

[1] This line is omitted in the MS., and in place of it the man completes the unfinished blank verse of the last line of the woman's speech by beginning with the word "Speak."

[2] *i.e.* "And fill men's eyes with the sight of your blood."

Man. Where are thy counsels, where thy good examples,
And that kind roughness of a father's anger?
Wom. Whom have I now to lean my old age on?
Who[1] will abide those weary wayward years,
A burthen even to more than to the feelers?
Man. Who shall I now have to set right my youth?
Where shall I fetch so true and sound advice,
Proceeding from a free and open heart?
[*Within.*] Gods, if ye be not fled from heaven, help us!
Nero. I like this music well; they like not mine
Now in the tears of all men let me sing,
And make it doubtful to the gods above
Whether the earth be pleased or do complain. [*Sings.*
Man. But may the man that all this blood hath shed
Never bequeath to th' earth an old grey head;
Let him untimely be cut off before,
And leave a corse like this all wounds and gore;
Be there no friends at hand, no standers by
In love or pity moved to close that eye:
Oh, let him die, the hate and wished of all,
And not a tear to grace his funeral! [*Exit.*
Wom. Heaven, you will hear that which the world doth scorn,
The prayers of misery and souls forlorn:
Your anger waxeth by delaying stronger;
Oh, now for mercy, me despised no longer!
Let him that makes so many mothers childless,
Make his unhappy in her fruitfulness;
Let him no issue leave to bear his name,
Or son to right a father's wrongèd fame:
Our flames to quit, be righteous in your ire,
And when he dies let him want funeral fire. [*Exit.*

[1] This and the following line I have supplied from the MS. The meaning would seem to be, "Who will abide those weary wayward years which are even a greater burden to those that soothe them than to those that endure them?" The second and third lines of the following speech of the man have likewise been supplied from the MS.

Nero. Let Heaven do what it will, this I have done ;
Already do you feel my fury's weight.
Rome is become a grave of her late greatness ;
Her clouds of smoke have ta'en away the day,
Her flames the night.
Now, unrelenting eyes, what crave you more?

Enter NEOPHILUS.

Neoph. Oh, save yourself, my lord ; your palace burns.
Nero. My palace ! how? what traitorous hand ?

Enter TIGELLINUS.

Tig. Oh, fly, my lord, and save yourself betimes.
The wind doth beat the fire upon your house ;
The eating flame devours your double gates ;
Your pillars fall, your golden roofs do melt ;
Your antique tables and Greek imagery
The fire besets; and the smoke, you see,
Doth choke my speech : Oh, fly and save your life.
Nero. Heaven, thou dost strive. I see, for victory.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter NIMPHIDIUS.

Nim. See how fate works unto their purposed end,
And without all self-industry will raise
Whom they determine to make great and happy !
Nero thrusts down himself, I stir him not ;
He runs unto destruction, studies ways
To compass danger and attain the hate
Of all. Be his own wishes on his head,
Nor Rome with fire more than revenges burn !
Let me stand still, or lie, or sleep, I rise.
Poppæa some new favour will seek out

My wakings to salute ; I cannot stir
But messages of new preferment meet me.
Now she hath made me captain of the guard,
So well I bear me in these night alarms
That she imagined I was made for arms.
I now command the soldier, he the city :
If any chance do turn the prince aside,
As many hatreds, mischiefs threaten him,
Ours is his wife, his state and throne is ours :
He's next in right that hath the strongest powers. [*Exit.*



SCENE VI. —*A Room in* SCÆVINUS' *House.*

Enter SCÆVINUS *and* MILICHUS.

Scæv. O Troy, and O ye souls of our forefathers
Which in your country's fires were offered up,
How near your nephews [1] to your fortunes came.
Yet they were Grecian hands began your flame ;
But that our temples and our houses smoke,
Our marble buildings turn to be our tombs,
Burnt bones and spurned-at corses fill the streets.
Not Pyrrhus, nor thou, Hannibal, art author
Sad Rome is ruined by a Roman hand.[2]
But if to Nero's end this only way
Heaven's justice hath chosen out, and people's love
Could not but by these feebling ills be moved,
We do not then at all complain ; our harms
On this condition please us ; let us die
And cloy the Parthian with revenge and pity.

[1] Nephews :—Latin, nepotes, descendants.

[2] On the torn margin of the MS. is written against this passage the following fragment of a quotation :—

. . . . venturo
. . . liam pituro
. . . i
. . . iam. etc.

Mil. [*Aside.*] My master hath sealed up his testament;
Those bondmen which he liketh best, set free;
Given money, and more liberally than he used.
And now, as if a farewell to the world
Were meant, a sumptuous banquet hath he made;
Yet not with countenance that feasters use,
But cheers his friends the whilst himself looks sad.
Scæv. I have from Fortune's temple ta'en this sword;
May it be fortunate, and now at least,
Since it could not prevent, punish the evil.
To Rome it had been better done before,
But though less helping now they'll praise it more.
Great sovereign of all mortal actions,
Whom only wretched men and poets blame,
Speed thou the weapon which I have from thee.
'Twas not amid thy temple's monuments
In vain reposed; somewhat I know't hath done:
Oh, with new honours let it be laid up!
Strike boldly, arm; so many powerful prayers
Of dead and living hover over thee.
Mil. [*Aside.*] And though sometimes with talk impertinent
And idle fancies he would feign a mirth,
Yet it is easy seen somewhat is here
The which he dares not let his face make show of.
Scæv. Long want of use hath made it dull and blunt:
See, Milichus, this weapon better edged.[1]
Mil. Sharp'ning of swords! What! must we then have blows?
Or means my master, Cato-like, to exempt
Himself from power of Fates, and, cloyed with life,
Give the gods back their unregarded gift?
[*Aside.*] But he hath neither Cato's mind nor cause;
A man given o'er to pleasure and soft ease,
Which makes me still to doubt how in affairs
Of princes he dares meddle or desires.

[1] *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XV. 54, for this and other incidents in this Scene.

Scæv. We shall have blows on both sides, Milichus.
Provide me store of cloths to bind up wounds.
What an't be hurt for hurt; death is the worst!
The gods sure keep it hid from us that live,
How sweet death is, because we should go on
And be their bails.—There are about the house
Some stones that will stanch blood: see them sought out.—
This world I see hath no felicity:
I'll try the other.

Mil. [*Aside.*] Nero's life is sought;
The sword's prepared against another's breast,
The help for his.[1] It can be no private foe,
For then 'twere best to make it known, and call
His troops of bond and freedmen to his aid.
Besides, his counsellors, Seneca
And Lucan, are no managers of quarrels,
High spirits soaring still at great attempts,[2]
And such whose wisdoms to their other wrongs
Distaste the baseness of the government.

Scæv. Methinks I see him struggling on the ground,
Hear his unmanly outcries and lost prayers
Made to the gods which turn their heads away.
Nero, this day must end the world's desires,
And headlong send thee to unquenchèd fires. [*Exit.*

Mil. Why do I further idly stand debating?
My proofs are but too many and too frequent,
And princes' ears still to suspicions open.
Who ever, being but accused, was quit?
For states are wise and cut off ills that may be:
Mean men must die that others may sleep sound.
Chiefly that rule whose weakness, apt to fears
And bad deserts of all men, makes them know
There's none but is in heart what he's accused.[3] [*Exit.*

[1] *i.e.* For Scævinus' life.
[2] This and the two following lines are supplied from the MS.
[3] *i.e.* "It is those princes chiefly that rule whose weakness (that is, being quick to suspect cause of fears and the bad deserts of all men) makes them know," etc.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Golden House of* NERO.

Enter NERO, POPPÆA, NIMPHIDIUS, TIGELLINUS, NEOPHILUS, *and* EPAPHRODITUS.

NERO. This kiss, sweet love, I force from thee, and this;
And of such spoils and victories be more proud
Than if I had the fierce Pannonian
Or gray-eyed German ten times overcome.
Let Julius go and fight at end o' th' world,
And conquer from the wild inhabitants
Their cold and poverty, whilst Nero here
Makes other wars, wars where the conquered gains,
Where to o'ercome is to be prisoner.
O willingly I'll give my freedom up
And put on my own chains;
I am in love with my captivity.
Such Venus is, when on the sandy shore
Of Xanthus or on Ida's pleasant green
She leads the dance; her, the nymphs all a-row
And smiling Graces, do accompany.
If Bacchus could his straggling minion
Grace with a glorious wreath of shining stars,
Why should not heaven my Poppæa crown?
The northern team shall move into a round,
New constellations rise to honour thee;

The earth shall woo thy favours, and the sea
Lay his rich shells and treasures at thy feet.
For thee Hydaspes shall throw up his gold,
Panchaia breathe the rich delightful smells;
The Seres and the feathered man of Ind
Shall their fine arts and curious labours bring;
And where the sun's not known, Poppaea's name
Shall midst their feasts and barbarous pomp be sung.

Pop. Ay, now I am worthy to be queen o' th' world,
Fairer than Venus or than Bacchus' love;
But you'll anon unto your cut-boy Sporus,
Your new-made woman, to whom now, I hear,
You are wedded to.[1]

Nero. I wedded?

Pop. Ay! you wedded.
Did you not hear the words o' th' Auspices?
Was not the boy in bride-like garments drest?
Marriage books sealed as 'twere for issue to
Be had between you? solemn feasts prepared,
While all the court with "God give you joy" sounds?
It had been good Domitius, your father,
Had ne'er had other wife.

Enter MILICHUS.

Nero You're froward, fool; you're still so bitter. Who's that?

Nim. One that it seems, my lord, doth come in haste.

Nero. Yet in his face he sends his tale before him.
Bad news thou tellest!

Mil. 'Tis bad I tell, but good that I can tell it.
Therefore your majesty will pardon me
If I offend your ears to save your life.

Nero. Why? is my life endangered?
How ends the circumstance? thou wrack'st my thoughts.

Mil. My lord, your life's conspired against.

Nero. By whom?

[1] *Vide* Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 28.—*Bullen.*

Mil. I must be of the world excused in this,
If the great duty to your majesty
Makes me all other lesser to neglect.
Nero. Th'art a tedious fellow.
Tig. Speak, by whom?
Mil. By my master.
Nero. Who's thy master?
Mil. Scævinus.
Pop. Scævinus? why should he conspire,
Unless he think that likeness in conditions
May make him, too, worthy o' th' empire thought?
Nero. Who are else in it?
Mil. I think Natalis, Subrius Flavius,
Lucan, Seneca, and Lucius Piso,
Asper, and Quintianus.[1]
Nero. Ha' done,
Thou'lt reckon all Rome anon; and so thou may'st,
They're villains all, I'll not trust one of them.
Oh, that the Romans had all but one neck!
Pop. Piso's sly creeping into men's affections
And popular arts have given long cause of doubt,
And th' others' late observèd discontents,
Risen from misinterpreted disgraces,
May make us credit this relation.
Nero. Where are they? come they not upon us yet?
See my guard doubled, see the gates shut up!
Why, they'll surprise us in our court anon.
Mil. Not so, my lord; they are at Piso's house
And think themselves yet safe and undescried.
Nero. Let's thither then,
And take them in this false security.
Tig. 'Twere better first to publish them traitors.
Nim. That were to make them so
And force them all upon their enmities.
Now without stir or hazard they'll be ta'en,
And boldly trial dare and law demand;

[1] Compare Tacitus, Ann. XV. 49 and 50.

Besides, this accusation may be forged
By malice or mistaking.

Pop. What likes you do, Nimphidius, out of hand;
Two ways distract when either would prevail.
If they, suspecting but this fellow's absence,
Should try the city and attempt their friends,
How dangerous might Piso's favour be?

Nim. Ay, to himself. 'Twould make the matter clear
Which now upon one servant's credit stands.
The city's favour keeps within the bounds
Of profit, they'll love none to hurt themselves;
Honour and friendship they hear others name,
Themselves do neither feel nor know the same.
To put them yet, though needless, in some fear
We'll keep their streets with armèd companies;
Then, if they stir, they see their wives and houses
Prepared a prey to th' greedy soldier.

Pop. Let us be quick then, you to Piso's house,
While I and Tigellinus further sift
This fellow's knowledge.

Nero. Look to the gates and walls o' th' city; look
The river be well kept; have watches set
In every passage and in every way.

[*Exeunt all except* NERO

But who shall watch these watches?[1] What if they
Begin and play the traitors first? Oh, where shall I
Seek faith, or them that I may wisely trust?
The city favours the conspirators;
The senate in disgrace and fear hath lived;
The camp—why, most are soldiers that he named;
Besides, he knows not all, and like a fool,
I interrupted him, else had he named
Those that stood by me. O security!
Which we so much seek after, yet art still

[1] Against this passage, in the margin of the MS. is written:—"Sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes? Juvenal." It is from the 6th Satire, lines 347—8.

To courts a stranger, and dost rather choose
The smoky reeds and sedgy cottages,
Than the proud roofs and wanton courts of kings.
O sweet despisèd joys of poverty,
A happiness unknown unto the gods!
Would I had rather in poor Gabii[1]
Or Ulubrae, a ragged magistrate,
Sat as a judge of measures and of corn
Than the adorèd monarch of the world.
Mother, thou didst deservedly in this,
That from a private and sure state didst raise
My fortunes to this slippery hill of greatness
Where I can neither stand nor fall with life. [*Exit.*



SCENE II.—*A Room in* SCÆVINUS' *House.*

Enter PISO, LUCAN, SCÆVINUS *and* FLAVIUS.

Flav. But since we are discovered, what remains
But put our lives upon our hands? These swords
Shall try us traitors or true citizens.
Scæv. And what should make this hazard doubt success?
Stout men are oft with sudden onsets daunted:
What shall this stage-player be?
Luc. It is not now
Augustus' gravity and Tiberius' craft,
But Tigellinus and Chrysogonus,
Eunuchs and women that we go against.
Scæv. This for thy own sake, this for ours we beg,
That thou wilt suffer him to be o'ercome;
Why should'st thou keep so many vowèd swords
From such a hated throat?
Flav. Or shall we fear
To trust unto the gods so good a cause?

[1] Our author is imitating Juvenal, X. 99–102.—*Bullen.*

Luc. By this we may ourselves heaven's favour pro-
Because all nobleness and worth on earth [mise,
We see's on our side. Here the Fabii's sons,
Here the Corvini are, and take that part
Their noble fathers would if now they lived.
There's not a soul that claims nobility,
Either by his or his forefather's merit,
But is with us; with us the gallant youth
Whom passèd dangers or hot blood makes bold;
Staid men suppressed their wisdom or their faith
To whom our counsels we have not revealed,
And while our party seeking to disgrace
They traitors call us, each man treason praiseth
And hateth faith when Piso is a traitor.

Scæv. And not adventure what by stoutness can
Befall us worse than will by cowardice:
If both the people and the soldier failed us
Yet shall we die worthy at least ourselves,
Worthy our ancestors. O Piso, think,
Think on that day when in the Parthian field
Thou cried'st to the flying legions to turn
And look death in the face; he was not grim,
But fair and lovely when he came in arms.
Oh, why there died we not on Syrian swords?
Were we reserved to prisons and to chains?
Behold the gallows is in every street;
And even now they come to clap on irons.
Must Piso's head be showed upon a pole?
Those members torn, rather than Roman-like,
And Piso-like, with weapons in our hands,[1]
Fighting in throng of enemies to die?
And that it shall not be a civil war
Nero prevents, whose cruelty hath left
Few citizens; we are not Romans now
But Moors, and Jews, and utmost Spaniards,
And Asia's refuse that do fill the city.

[1] This line is omitted in the MS.

Piso. Part of us are already tak'n ; the rest
Amazed and seeking holes. Our hidden ends
You see laid open ; court and city armed
And for fear joining to the part they fear.
Why should we move desperate and hopeless arms
And vainly spill that noble blood that should
Crystal Euphrates and the Median fields,[1]
Not Tiber colour ? And the more you show
Your loves and readiness to loose your lives,
The lother I am to adventure them.
Yet am I proud you would for me have died ;
But live and keep yourselves for worthier ends.
No mother but my own shall weep my death,
Nor will I make, by overthrowing us,
Heaven guilty of more faults ; yet from the hopes
Your own good wishes rather than the thing
Do make you see, this comfort I receive
Of death unforced.[2] O friends, I would not die :
When I can live no longer, 'tis my glory
That free and willing I give up this breath,
Leaving such courages as yours untried.
But to be long in talk of dying would
Show a relenting and a doubtful mind :
By this you shall my quiet thoughts intend ;
I blame not earth nor heaven for my end. [*Dies.*

Luc. Oh, that this noble courage had been shown
Rather on enemies' breasts than on thy own.

Scæv. But sacred and inviolate be thy will,
And let it lead and teach us.
This sword I could more willingly have thrust
Through Nero's breast ; that Fortune hath denied me,
It now shall through Scævinus. [*Exeunt.*

[1] The MS. reads :—" Silver colour on the Median fields ; " the 4tos, " Christall Rubes and the Median fields."

[2] Compare Tacitus, Ann. XV. 59, for allusions in this and the above speech.

SCENE III.—*A Room in the Golden House of* NERO.

Enter TIGELLINUS.

What multitudes of villains are here gotten
In a conspiracy which, Hydra-like,
Still in the cutting off increaseth more.
The more we take, the more are still appeached,[1]
And every man brings in a new company.
I wonder what we shall do with them all!
The prisons cannot hold more than they have,
The jails are full, the holes with gallants stink:
Straw and gold shine together. Zounds! I think,
'Twere best to shut the gates o' th' city up
And make it all one jail; for this I am sure,
There's not an honest man within the walls.
And though the guilty do exceed the free,
Yet through a base and fatal cowardice
They all assist in taking one another,
And by their own hands are to prison led.
There's no condition, nor degree of men,
But here are met; men of the sword and gown,
Plebeians, senators, and women too;
Ladies that might have slain him with their eyes,
Would use their hands; philosophers,
And politicians. Politicians?
Their plot was laid too short. Poets would now
Not only write but be the arguments
Of tragedies. The emperor's much pleased
That some have nam'd Seneca; and I
Will have Petronius.[2] One promise of pardon
Or fear of torture will accusers find. [*Exit.*

[1] Impeached.
[2] Compare Tacitus, Ann. XVI. 18.

SCENE IV.—*A Prison in Rome.*

Enter NIMPHIDIUS, LUCAN, *and* SCÆVINUS, *with a* Guard.

Nim. Though Piso's suddenness and guilty hand
Prevented hath the death he should have had,
Yet you abide it must.

Luc. Oh, may the earth lie lightly on his corse!
Sprinkle his ashes with your flowers and tears;
The love and dainty[1] of mankind is gone!

Scæv. What only now we can, we'll follow thee
That way thou lead'st and wait on thee in death,
Which we had done had not these hindered us.

Nim. Nay, other ends your grievous crimes await,
Ends which the law and your deserts impose.

Scæv. Why, what have we deserved?

Nim. That punishment that traitors unto princes,
And enemies to the state they live in, merit.

Scæv. If by the state this government you mean,
I justly am an enemy unto it:
That's but to Nero, you, and Tigellinus.
That glorious world that even beguiles the wise,
Being looked into, includes but three or four
Corrupted men which were they all removed,
'Twould for the common state much better be.

Nim. Why, what can you i' th' government mislike,
Unless it grieve you that the world's in peace
Or that our armies conquer without blood?
Hath not his power with foreign visitations
And stranger's honour more acknowledged been
Than any was before him? Hath not he
Disposed of frontier kingdoms with success,
Given away crowns, whom he set up prevailing?[2]
The rival seat of the Arsacidae,

[1] A term of endearment;—"darling."

[2] *i.e.* Hath he not given away crowns, and are not those whom he set up in such kingdoms prevailing?

That thought their brightness equal unto ours,
Is it not crowned by him, by him doth reign?
If we have any war, it's beyond Rhine
And Euphrates, and such whose different chances
Have rather served for pleasure and discourse
Than troubled us at home. The city hath
Increased in wealth, with building been adorned,
The arts have flourished, and the Muses sung;
And that his justice and well tempered reign
Have the best judges pleased, the powers divine,
Their blessings and so long prosperity
Of th' empire under him, enough declare.

Scæv. You freed the state from wars abroad, but 'twas
To spoil at home more safely and divert
The Parthian enmity on us, and yet
The glory rather and the spoils of war
Have wanting been, the loss and charge we have.
Your peace is full of cruelty and wrong;
Laws taught to speak to present purposes;
Wealth, and fair houses dangerous faults become;
Much blood i' th' city and no common deaths,
But gentlemen and consulary houses.
On Cæsar's own house look; hath that been free?
Hath he not shed the blood he calls divine?
Hath not that nearness which should love beget,
Always on him been cause of hate and fear?
Virtue and power suspected and kept down?
They whose great ancestors this empire made,
Distrusted in the government thereof?
A happy state where Decius is a traitor,
Narcissus[1] true! nor only was't unsafe
T' offend the prince; his freedmen worse were feared,
Whose wrongs with such insulting pride were heard
That even the faulty it made innocent.

[1] *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XI. 33 and 38. By Decius, I suppose is meant Decius Mus.

If we complained, that was itself a crime,
Ay, though it were to Cæsar's benefit;
Our writings pried into, false guiltiness,
Thinking each taxing pointed out itself;
Our private whisperings listened after; nay,
Our thoughts were forcèd out of us and punished:
And had it been in you to have ta'en away
Our understanding as you did our speech,
You would have made us thought this honest too.

Nim. Can malice narrow eyes?
See anything yet more it can traduce!

Scaev. His long-continued taxes I forbear,
In which he chiefly showed himself a prince;
His robbing altars,[1] sale of holy things,
The antique goblets of adorèd rust
And sacred gifts of kings and people sold.
Nor was the spoil more odious than the use
They were employed in; spent on shame and lust,
Which still have been so endless in their change,
And made us know a divers servitude.
But that he hath been sufferèd so long,
And prospered, as you say, for that to thee,
O heaven! I turn myself to thee and cry, "No god
Hath care of us!" Yet have we our revenge,
As much as earth may be revenged on heaven:
This divine honour Nero shall usurp,
And prayers and feasts and adoration have
As well as Jupiter.

Nim. Away, blaspheming tongue,
Be ever silent for thy bitterness. [*Exeunt*

[1] Compare Tacitus, Ann. XV. 45; Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 32.—*Bullen.*

SCENE V.—*A Room in the Golden House of* NERO.

Enter NERO, POPPÆA, TIGELLINUS, FLAVIUS, NEOPHILUS, EPAPHRODITUS, *and* Guard *with a* Young Man.

Nero. What could cause thee,
Forgetful of my benefits and thy oath,
To seek my life?

Flav. Nero, I hated thee;
Nor was there any of thy soldiers
More faithful, whilst thou faith deserv'dst, than I.
Together did I leave[1] to be a subject,
And thou a prince. Cæsar was now become
A player on the stage, a waggoner,
A burner of our houses and of us,
A parricide of wife and mother.

Tig. Villain! dost know where and of whom thou speak'st?

Nero. Have you but one death for him? Let it be
A feeling one, Tigellinus. Be't thy charge,
And let me see thee witty in't.

Tig. Come, sirrah!
We'll see how stoutly you'll stretch out your neck.

Flav. Would thou durst strike as stoutly!

[*Exeunt* TIGELLINUS *and* FLAVIUS.

Nero. And what's he there?

Epaph. One that in whisp'ring I o'erheard
What pity 'twas, my lord, that Piso died.

Nero. And why was't pity, sirrah, Piso died?

Young M. My lord, 'twas pity he deserved to die.

Pop. [*Aside.*] How much this youth my Otho doth resemble;
Otho my first, my best love who is now,
Under pretext of governing, exiled
To Lusitania, honourably banished.[2]

[1] Cease.

[2] I have here followed Mr. Bullen's suggestion as to the arrangement of this and the following line, since it seems [illegible] MS.

[3] *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XIII. 46.

Nero. Well, if you be so passionate,
I'll make you spend your pity on your prince
And good men, not on traitors.

Young M. The gods forbid my prince should pity need.
Somewhat the sad remembrance did me stir
O' th' frail and weak condition of our kind,
Somewhat his greatness, than whom yesterday
The world, but Cæsar, could show nothing higher:
Besides, some virtues and some worth he had,
That might excuse my pity to an end
So cruel and unripe.

Pop. [*Aside.*] I know not how this stranger moves my mind.
His face, methinks, is not like other mens',
Nor do they speak thus. Oh, his words invade
My weakened senses, and overcome my heart.

Nero. Your pity shows your favour and your will,
Which side you are inclined to, had you power:
You can but pity, else you'd Cæsar fear;
Your ill affection then shall punished be.
Take him to execution; he shall die
That the death pities of mine enemy.

Young M. This benefit at least
Sad death shall give, to free me from the power
Of such a government; and if I die
For pitying human chance and Piso's end,
There will be some, too, that will pity mine.

Pop. [*Aside.*] Oh, what a dauntless look, what sparkling eyes,
Threat'ning in suffering! Sure some noble blood
Is hid in rags; fear argues a base spirit;
In him what courage and contempt of death!
And shall I suffer one I love to die?
[*Aloud*] He shall not die. Hands off this man! Away!
Nero, thou shalt not kill this guiltless man.

Nero. He guiltless, strumpet!

[*Strikes* POPPÆA, *who falls.*

She is in love with the smooth face of the boy.

Neoph. Alas, my lord, you have slain her.

Epaph. Help, help, she dies!

Nero. Poppæa, Poppæa, speak; I am not angry;
I did not mean to hurt thee; speak, sweet love!

Neoph. She's dead, my lord.

Nero. Fetch her again, she shall not die:
I'll break the iron gates of hell
And loose the imprisoned shadows of the deep,
And force from death this far too worthy prey.
She is not dead:
The crimson red that like the morning shows,
When from her windows, all with roses strewed,
She peepeth forth, forsakes not yet her cheeks;
Her breath, that like a honey-suckle smelt,
Twining about the prickling eglantine,
Yet moves her lips; those quick and piercing eyes
That did in beauty challenge heaven's eyes,
Yet shine as they were wont! Oh, no, they do not,
See how they grow obscure! Oh, see, they close
And cease to take or give light to the world.
What stars soe'er you are assured to grace
The firmament (for, lo! the twinkling fires
Together throng, and that clear milky space,
Of storms, and Pleiades, and thunder void,
Prepares your room), do not with wry aspect
Look on your Nero, who in blood shall mourn
Your luckless fate, and many a breathing soul
Send after you to wait upon their queen.
This shall begin; the rest shall follow after,
And fill the streets with outcries and with slaughter.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*A Room in* SENECA'S *Villa.*

Enter SENECA *with two of his* Friends.

Sen. What means your mourning, this ungrateful sorrow?
Where are your precepts of philosophy,
Where our preparèd resolution
So many years fore-studied against danger?
To whom is Nero's cruelty unknown,
Or what remained after his mother's blood,
But his instructor's death? Leave, leave those tears;
Death from me nothing takes but what's a burthen,
A clog to that free spark of heavenly fire:
But that in Seneca the which you loved,
Which you admired, doth and shall still remain,
Secure of death, untouchèd of the grave.

1st Friend. We'll not belie our tears, we wail not thee;
It is ourselves and our own loss we grieve:
To thee what loss in such a change can be,
Virtue is paid her due by death alone.
To our own losses do we give these tears,
That lose thy love, thy boundless knowledge lose,
Lose the unpatterned sample of thy virtue,
Lose whatsoe'er may praise or sorrow move:
In all these losses yet of this we glory,
That 'tis thy happiness that makes us sorry.

2nd Friend. If there be any place for ghosts of good men,
If, as we have been long taught, great men's souls
Consume not with their bodies, thou shalt see,
Looking from out the dwellings of the air,
True duties to thy memory performed;
Not in the outward pomp of funeral,
But in remembrance of thy deeds and words,
The oft recalling of thy many virtues:

The tomb that shall th' eternal relics keep
Of Seneca shall be his hearers' hearts.

Sen. Be not afraid, my soul; go cheerfully
To thy own heaven from whence at first let down.
Thou loathly this imprisoning flesh put'dst on;
Now, lifted up, thou ravished shalt behold
The truth of things at which we wonder here,
And foolishly do wrangle on beneath;
And like a god, shalt walk the spacious air,
And see what even to conceit[1] 's denied.
Great soul o' th' world, that through the parts diffused
Of this vast All, guid'st that thou dost inform;
You blessèd minds, that from the spheres you move
Look on men's actions not with idle eyes,
And gods we go to, aid me in this strife
And combat of my flesh that, ending, I
May still show Seneca, and myself die. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE VII.—*A Room in a Villa at Cuma.*

Enter ANTONIUS *and* ENANTHE.

Ant. Sure this message of the prince's,
So grievous and unlooked for, will appal
Petronius much.

Enan. Will not death any man?

Ant. It will; but him so much the more
That, having lived to his pleasure, shall forego
So delicate a life. I do not marvel
That Seneca and such sour fellows can
Leave that they never tasted, but when we
That have the nectar of thy kisses felt,
That drinks away the troubles of this life
And but one banquet makes of forty years,
Must come to leave this—But soft, here he is.

[1] Imagination.

Enter PETRONIUS *and a* Centurion.

Pet. Leave me a while, centurion, to my friends;
Let me my farewell take, and thou shalt see
Nero's commandment quickly obeyed in me.
[*Exit* Centurion.
Come, let us drink and dash the posts with wine!
Here throw your flowers; fill me a swelling bowl
Such as Mæcenas or my Lucan drank
On Virgil's birthday.

Enan. What means, Petronius, this unseasonable
And causeless mirth? Why, comes not from the prince
This man to you a messenger of death?
[*They bring wine.*

Pet. Here, fair Enanthe, whose plump, ruddy cheek
Exceeds the grape that makes this– here, my girl!
[*Drinks.*
And think'st thou death a matter of such horror?
Why, he must have this pretty dimpling chin,
And will peck out those eyes that now so wound.

Enan. Why, it is not th' extremest of all ills?

Pet. It is indeed the last and end of ills:
The gods, before they'd let us taste death's joys,
Placed us i' th' toils and sorrows of this world,
Because we should perceive th'amends and thank them;
Death, the grim knave, but leads you to the door
Where, entered once, all curious pleasures come
To meet and welcome you.
A troop of beauteous ladies, from whose eyes
Love thousand arrows, thousand graces shoots,
Put forth their fair hands to you and invite
To their green arbours and close shadowed walks,
Whence banished is the roughness of our years:
Only the west wind blows, 'tis ever spring
And ever summer. There the laden boughs
Offer their tempting burdens to your hand,
Doubtful your eye or taste inviting more.

There every man his own desires enjoys;
Fair Lucrece lies by lusty Tarquin's side,
And woos him now again to ravish her.
Nor us, though Roman, Lais will refuse;
To Corinth any man may go[1]: no mask,
No envious garment doth those beauties hide,
Which nature made so moving to be spied.
But in bright crystal, which doth supply all,
And white transparent veils they are attired,
Through which the pure snow underneath doth shine;—
Can it be snow from whence such flames arise?
Mingled with that fair company shall we
On banks of violets and of hyacinths
Of Love's devising, sit and gently sport;
And all the while melodious music hear
And poets' songs that music far exceed;
The old Anacreon crowned with smiling flowers,
And amorous Sappho on her Lesbian lute
Beauty's sweet scars and Cupid's godhead sing.[2]

Ant. What! be not ravished with thy fancies; do not
Court nothing, or make love unto our fears!

Pet. Is't nothing that I say?

Ant. But empty words

Pet. Why, thou requir'st some instance of the eye!
Wilt thou go with me then, and see that world
Which either will return thy old delights,
Or square thy appetites anew to theirs?

Ant. Nay, I had rather far believe thee here;
Others' ambition such discoveries seek.
Faith, I am satisfied with the base delights
Of common men. A wench, a house I have,
And of my own a garden: I'll not change
For all your walks and ladies and rare fruits.

Pet. Your pleasures must of force resign to these.

[1] Compare Horace, Epist. I. 17. 36.—*Bullen.*

[2] Compare this description of Paradise with the description in the Koran, Chap. LV. and LVI.

In vain you shun the sword, in vain the sea,
In vain is Nero feared or flatterèd:
Hither you must and leave your purchased houses,
Your new made garden and your black-browed wife,
And of the trees thou hast so quaintly set,
Not one but the displeasant cypress shall
Go with thee.[1]

Ant. Faith 'tis true, we must at length;
But yet, Petronius, while we may awhile
We would enjoy them; those we have we're sure of,
When that you talk of 's doubtful and to come.

Pet. Perhaps thou think'st to live yet twenty years
Which may, unlooked for, be cut off, as mine;
If not, to endless time compared, is nothing.
What you endure must, even endure now;
Nor stay not to be last at table set.
Each best day of our life at first doth go,
To them succeeds diseasèd age and woe;
Now die your pleasures, and the days you pray
Your rhymes and loves and jests will take away.[2]
And therefore, my sweet, thou wilt go with me,
And not live here to what thou wouldst not see.

Enan. Would you have me then kill myself, and die,
And go I know not to what places there?

Pet. What places dost thou fear?
Th' ill-favoured lake they tell thee, thou must pass,
And the black frogs that croak about the brim?

Enan. Oh, pardon her, though death affrights a woman
Whose pleasures though you timely here divine,
The pains we know and see.

Pet. The pain is life's; death rids that pain away.
Come boldly, there's no danger in this ford;
Children pass through it. If it be a pain,
You have this comfort that you past it are.

[1] Compare Horace, Od. II. 14. 21–4.—*Bullen.*
[2] *i.e.* Old age and woe will take away your rhymes and loves, etc.

Nero. Why, I never fearèd them.
Nim. That was your fault:
Your majesty might give us leave to blame
Your dangerous courage and that noble soul
Too prodigal of itself.[1]
Nero. A prince's mind knows neither fear nor hope:
The beams of royal majesty are such
As all eyes with it are amazed and weakened,
But it with nothing. I at first contemned
Their weak devices and faint enterprise.
Why thought they against him to have prevailed
Whose childhood was from Messalina's spite
By dragons[2] that the earth gave up, preserved?
Such guard my cradle had, for fate had then
Pointed me out to be what now I am.
Should all the legions of the provinces,
In one united, against me conspire,
I could disperse them with one angry eye;
My brow's a host of men. Come, Tigellinus,
Let's turn this bloody banquet Piso meant us,
Into a merry feast; we'll drink and challenge
Fortune. Who's that Neophilus?

Enter a Messenger.

Neoph. A courier from beyond the Alps, my lord.
Nero. News of some German victory, belike,
Or Britain overthrown.
Neoph. The letters come from France.
Nim. Why smiles your majesty?
Nero. Do I smile? I should be afraid;
There's one in arms against me, Nimphidius.
Nim. What, armed against your majesty?
Nero. Our lieutenant of the province, Julius Vindex.
Tig. Who, that giddy Frenchman?

[1] Compare Horace, Od. I. 12. 37–8.—*Bullen.*
[2] *Vide* Tacitus, Ann. XI. 11; Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 6.—*Bullen.*

Nim. His province is disarmed, my lord; he hath
No legion nor a soldier under him.

Epaph. One that by blood and rapine would repair
His state consumed in vanities and lust.

Enter another Messenger.

Tig. He will not find out three to follow him.

Nim. More news, my lord.

Nero. Is it of Vindex that thou hast to say?

Mess. Vindex is up, and with him France in arms;
The noblemen and people throng to th' cause;
Money and armour cities do confer;
The country doth send in provision;
Young men bring bodies, old men lead them forth;
Ladies do coin their jewels into pay;
The sickle now is framed into a sword,
And drawing horses are to manage[1] taught:
France nothing doth but war and fury breathe.

Nero. All this fierce talk's but "Vindex doth rebel",
And I will hang him.

Tig. How long came you forth after the former messenger?

Mess. Four days; but by the benefit of sea
And weather I arrived with him.

Nim. How strong was Vindex at your setting forth?

Mess. He was esteemed a hundred thousand.

Tig. Men enough.

Nim. And soldiers few enough:
Tumultuary troops, undisciplined,
Untrained in service, to waste victuals good;
But when they come to look on war's black wounds
And but afar off see the face of death——

Nero. It falls out for my empty coffers well,
The spoil of such a large and goodly province
Enriched with trade and long enjoyèd peace.

[1] Here, "to submit to the bridle;" compare his horses "are taught their manage," As You Like It, I. 1.

Tig. What order will your majesty have taken
For levying forces to suppress this stir?
Nero. What order should we take? We'll laugh and drink.
Think'st thou 'tis fit my pleasures be disturbed
When any Frenchman lists to break his neck!
They have not heard of Piso's fortune yet;
Let that tale fight with them. What order needs!
Nim. Your majesty shall find
This French heat quickly of itself grow cold.
Nero. Come away:
Nothing can come that this night's sport can stay.
[*Exeunt* NERO, NIMPHIDIUS, TIGELLINUS, *and* Attendants.
Neoph. What makes, I wonder, him so confident
In this revolt now grown unto a war,
And ensigns in the field; when in the other,
Being but the plot of a conspiracy,
He showed himself so wretchedly dismayèd?
Epaph. Faith, the right nature of a coward to slight
Dangers that seem far off. Piso was here,
Ready to enter at the presence-door
And drag him out of his abusèd chair;
And then he trembled. Vindex is in France,
And many woods and seas and hills between.
Neoph. 'Twas strange that Piso was so soon suppressed.
Epaph. Strange? strange indeed; for had he but come up
And ta'en the court in that affright and stir
While unresolved for whom or what to do
Each only other had in jealousy,
While as appallèd majesty not yet
Had time to set the countenance,—
Neoph. He would
Have hazarded the royal seat.
Epaph. Nay, had it without hazard; all the court
Had for him been and those disclosed their love

And favour in the cause, which now to hide
And colour their good meanings, ready were
To show their forwardness against it most.

Neoph. But for a stranger with a naked province,
Without allies or friends i' th' state, to challenge
A prince upheld with thirty legions,
Royal in four descents of ancestors,
And fourteen years continuance of reign,
Why it is—

Enter NERO, NIMPHIDIUS, *and* TIGELLINUS.

Nero. Galba and Spain? What? Spain and Galba too? [*Exeunt* NERO *and* NIMPHIDIUS.

Epaph. I pray thee, Tigellinus, what fury's this?
What strange event, what accident hath thus
O'ercast your countenances?

Tig. Down we were set at table and began
With sparkling bowls to chase our fears away,
And mirth and pleasure looked out of our eyes;
When, lo, a breathless messenger arrives
And tells how Vindex and the powers of France
Have Sergius [1] Galba chosen emperor,
With what applause the legions him receive;
That Spain's revolted, Portingale hath joined;
As much suspected is of Germany.
But Nero, not abiding out the end,
O'erthrew the tables, dashed against the ground
The cup which he so much, you know, esteemed;[2]
Teareth his hair and with incensèd rage
Curseth false men and gods the lookers on.

Neoph. His rage, we saw, was wild and desperate.

Epaph. Oh, you unsearchèd wisdoms which do laugh
At our securities and fears alike,

[1] This is a mistake: our author is following Suetonius, Vit. Gal. 4. Sergius Galba was an orator who lived before the time of Cicero; it should be Servius.

[2] Compare Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 47.

And plan [1] to show our weakness and your power,
Make us contemn the harms which surest strike;
When you our glories and our pride undo,
Our overthrow you make ridiculous too. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE II.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter NIMPHIDIUS.

Nim. Slow moving counsels and the sliding year
Have brought me to the long-foreseen destruction
Of this misled young man. His state is shaken
And I will push it on; revolted France,
Nor the conjurèd provinces of Spain,
Nor his own guilt shall like to me oppress him.[2]
I to his easy yielding fears proclaim
New German mutinies and all the world
Rousing itself in hate of Nero's name;
I his distracted counsels do disperse
With fresh despairs; I animate the senate
And the people, to engage them past recall
In prejudice of Nero: and in brief
Perish he must, the fates and I resolve it.
Which to effect, I presently will go
Proclaim a donative in Galba's name.

Enter ANTONIUS.

Ant. [*Aside.*] Yonder's Nimphidius, our commander, now:
I with respect must speak and smooth my brow.
[*Aloud.*] Captain, all hail!
Nim. Antonius, well met.
Your place of tribune in this anarchy——

[1] The 4tos and MS. read "plain."
[2] *i.e.* Neither France, Spain, nor his own guilt, shall oppress him as much as Nimphidius.

Ant. This anarchy, my lord? Is Nero dead?

Nim. This anarchy, this yet unstilted time
While Galba is unseizèd of the empire
Which Nero hath forsook.

Ant. Hath Nero then resigned the empire?

Nim. In effect he hath, for he is fled to Egypt.

Ant. My lord, you tell strange news to me.

Nim. But nothing strange to me,
Who every moment knew of his despairs.
The couriers came so fast with fresh alarms
Of new revolts that he, unable quite
To bear his fears which he had long concealed,
Is now revolted from himself and fled.

Ant. Thrust with report and rumours from his seat!
My lord, I know the emperor depends on you [1]
As you determine.

Nim. There it lies Antonius.
What should we do? It boots not to rely
On Nero's sinking fortunes; and to sit
Securely looking on, were to receive
An emperor from Spain: which how disgraceful
It were to us who, if we weigh ourselves,
The most material accessions are
Of all the Roman empire. Which disgrace
To cover we must join ourselves betimes,
And thereby seem to have created Galba.
Therefore I'll straight proclaim a donative
Of thirty thousand sesterces a man.

Ant. I think so great a gift was never heard of.
Galba, they say, is frugally inclined:
Will he avow so great a gift as this?

Nim. Howe'er he like of it he must avow it,
If by our promise he be once engaged;
And since the soldiers' care belongs to me,
I will have care of them and of their good.

[1] *i.e.* The place of Emperor proceeds from you.

Let them thank me if I through this occasion
Procure for them so great a donative. [*Exit.*

Ant. So you be thanked it skills not[1] who prevails,
Galba or Nero, traitor to them both!
You give it out that Nero's fled to Egypt,
Who, with the fright of your reports amazed,
By our device doth lurk for better news,
Whilst you inevitably do betray him.
Works he all this for Galba then? Not so:
I have long seen his climbing to the empire
By secret practices of gracious women,
And other instruments of the late court.
That was his love to her that me refused;
And now by this he would gain the soldiers' favour.
Now is the time to quit Poppæa's scorn
And his rivallity. I'll straight reveal
His treacheries to Galba's agents here. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in* PHAON'S *Villa.*[2]

Enter TIGELLINUS *with the* Guard.

Tig. You see what issue things do sort unto;
Yet may we hope not only impunity,[3]
But with our fellows part o' th' gift proclaimed.

Guard. Here he comes.

Enter NERO.

Nero. Whither go you? stay, my friends;
'Tis Cæsar calls you; stay, my loving friends.

Tig. We were his slaves, his footstools, and must crouch,

[1] *i.e.* It matters not.

[2] In locating this and some of the other scenes, I have followed the historians, since there is nothing in our dramatist to show where they take place.

[3] Freedom from punishment.

But now, with such observance to his feet;
It is his misery that calls us friends.

Nero. And moves you not the misery of a prince?
O stay, my friends! stay, harken to the voice
Which once you knew!

Tig. Hark to the people's cries,
Hark to the streets that "Galba, Galba," ring.

Nero. The people may forsake me without blame,
I did them wrong to make you rich and great,
I took their houses to bestow on you;
Treason in them hath name of liberty:
Your fault hath no excuse, you are my fault
And the excuse of others' treachery.

Tig. Shall we with staying seem his tyrannies
T' uphold, as if we were in love with them?
We are excused, unless we stay too long,
As forcèd ministers and a part of wrong.

[*Exeunt all except* NERO.

Nero. Oh, now I see the vizard from my face,
So lovely and so fearful, is fall'n off;
That vizard, shadow, nothing,—majesty
Which, like a child acquainted with his fears,
Whilom men trembled at and now contemn.
Nero forsaken is of all the world,
The world of truth. Oh, fall some vengeance down
Equal unto their falsehoods and my wrongs!
Might I ascend the chariot of the sun
And like another Phaeton consume
In flames of all the world, a pile of death
Worthy the state and greatness I have lost!
Or were I now but lord of my own fires
Wherein false Rome yet once again might smoke
And perish, all unpitied of her gods,
That all things in their last destruction might
Perform a funeral honour to their lord!
O Jove! dissolve with Cæsar Cæsar's world;
Or you whom Nero rather should invoke,

Black chaos and you fearful shapes beneath,
That with a long and not vain envy have
Sought to destroy this work of th' other gods,
Now let your darkness cease the spoils of day,
And the world's first contention end your strife.

Enter two Romans.

1st Rom. Though others, bound with greater benefits,
Have left your changèd fortunes and do run
Whither new hopes do call them, yet come we.

Nero. Oh, welcome! come you to adversity!
Welcome, true friends. Why, there is faith on earth
Of thousand servants, friends and followers,—
Ye two are left. Your countenance, methinks,
Gives comfort and new hopes.

2nd Rom. Do not deceive your thoughts:
My lord, we bring no comfort; would we could.
But the last duty to perform and best
We ever shall, a free death to persuade,
To cut off hopes of fiercer cruelty,
And scorn more cruel to a worthy soul.

1st Rom. The Senate have decreed you're punishable
After the fashion of our ancestors,
Which is, your neck being lockèd in a fork,
You must be naked whipped and scourged to death.[1]

Nero. The Senate thus decreed? they, that so oft
My virtues flattered have, and gifts of mind,[2]
My government preferred to ancient times,
And challenged Numa to compare with me?
Have they so horrible an end sought out?
No, here I bear that shall prevent such shame;
This hand shall yet from that deliver me,
And faithful be alone unto his lord.
Alas, how sharp and terrible is death!
Oh, must I die, must now my senses close;

[1] Compare Suetonius, Vit. Ner. 49.
[2] The MS. reads "wit."

For ever die, and ne'er return again,
Never more see the sun, nor heaven, nor earth?
Whither go I? What shall I be anon?
What horrid journey wand'rest thou, my soul,
Under th' earth in dark, damp, dusky vaults?
Or shall I now to nothing be resolved?
My fears become my hopes; Oh, would I might.
Methinks, I see the boiling Phlegethon
And the dull people feared of them we fear,
The dread and terror of the gods themselves;
The furies armed with links, with whips, with snakes,
And my own furies far more mad than they,
My mother and those troops of slaughtered friends.
And now the judge is brought unto the throne,
That will not leave[1] unto authority,
Nor favour the oppressions of the great!
1st Rom. These are the idle terrors of the night,
Which wise men, though they teach, do not believe,
To curb our pleasures feigned, and aid the weak;—
2nd Rom. Death's wrongful defamation, which would make
Us shun this happy haven of our rest,
This end of evils, as some fearful harm;—
1st Rom. Shadows and fond imaginations,
Which now, you see, on earth but children fear.
2nd Rom. Why should our faults fear punishment from them?
What do the actions of this life concern
The other world, with which is no commerce?
1st Rom. Would heaven and stars necessity compel[2]
Us to do that which after it would punish?
2nd Rom. Let us not after our lives' end believe
More than we felt before it.
Nero. If any words had made me confident,
And boldly do for hearing others speak
Boldly, these might. But will you by example

[1] Be sparing. [2] *i.e.* Compel us from necessity to do that, etc.

Teach me the truth of your opinion
And make me see that you believe yourselves?
Will you by dying teach me to bear death
With courage?

1st Rom. No necessity of death
Hangs o'er our heads, no dangers threaten us,
Nor Senate's sharp decree, nor Galba's arms.

2nd Rom. Is this the thanks, then, thou dost pay our love?
Die basely and as such a life deserved!
Reserve thyself to punishment, and scorn
Of Rome and of thy laughing enemies!

[*Exeunt the two* Romans.

Nero. They hate me 'cause I would but live. What was't
You loved, kind friends, and came to see my death?
Let me endure all torture and reproach
That earth or Galba's anger can inflict,
Yet hell and Rhadamant[1] are more pitiless.

Re-enter the 1st Roman.

1st Rom. Though not deserved, yet once again I come
To warn thee to take pity on thyself.
The troops by the Senate sent descend the hill
And come.

Nero. To take me and to whip me unto death!
Oh, whither shall I fly?

1st Rom. Thou hast no choice.

Nero. Oh, whither must I fly? Hard is his hap
Who from death only must by death escape!
Where are they yet? Oh, may not I a little
Bethink myself?

1st Rom. They are at hand; hark, thou may'st hear the noise.

Nero. O Rome, farewell! Farewell, you theatres

[1] Rhadamanthus, one of the judges of Hell who obliged the dead to confess their crimes.

Where I so oft with popular applause
In song and action——Oh, they come, I die.
[*Falls on his sword.*

1*st Rom.* So base an end all just commiseration
Doth take away: yet what we do now spurn,
The morning sun saw fearful to the world.

Enter Friend *of* GALBA, ANTONIUS *and others, with* NIMPHIDIUS *bound.*

Fr. of Gal. You both shall die together, traitors both!
He to the commonwealth and thou to him,
And worse to a good prince. What! is he dead?
Hath fear encouraged him and made him thus
Prevent our punishment? Then die with him:
Fall thy aspiring at thy master's feet.
[*Kills* NIMPHIDIUS.

Ant. Who, though he justly perished, yet by thee
Deserved it not; nor ended there thy treason,
But even thought o' th' empire thou conceiv'st.
Galba's disgrace is in receiving that
Which the son of Nimphidia could hope.

1*st Rom.* Thus great bad men above them find a rod:
People, depart and say there is a God. [*Exeunt.*





HENRY PORTER.

Lent unto the company the 30 of Maye 1598[1] to bye a boocke[2] called *Love prevented* the some of fower pondes dd. to Thomas Dowton, Mr. Porter	li	iiij
Lent unto the company the 18 of Aguste 1598 to bye a Booke called *Hoote Anger soon cowld* of Mr. Porter, Mr Cheattell and bengemen Johnson in full payment, the some of	ll	vj
Lent unto Thomas Dowton the 22 of Desember 1598 to bye a boocke of Harey Porter called *the 2 pte of the 2 angrey Wemen of Abengton*	ii	v
Lent unto Harry Porter at the request of the company in earnest of his booke called *ij merey women of abington* the some of fortye shellings and for the resayte of that money he gave me his faythfull promise that I should have alle his bookes which he writte ether him selfe or with any other which some was dd. the 28th of febreary 1598[-9].	s	xl
Lent unto Harey Cheattell the 4 of March 1598[-9] in earneste of his boocke which Harey Porter and he is a writtinge the some of—called the *Spencers*.	s	x
Lent Harey Porter the 11 of Aprell 1599 the some of	d	ii vj
Lent Hary Porter the 16 of Aprell 1599 the some of	s d	~~xij~~[3]
Lent Harey Porter the 5 of Maye 1599 the some of	s d	ij vj
Lent Harey Porter the 15 of Maye 1599 the some of	s d	ii vj

Be it knowne unto all men that I Henry Porter do owe unto Phillip Henchlowe the some of x[s] of lawfull money of England which I did borrowe of hym the 26 of Maye a°. dom. 1599.

Henry Porter.[4]

[1] An earlier entry concerning Porter and Nash has been proved to be one of the forgeries to which Collier gave currency.
[2] Book in these entries means play.
[3] This entry is struck through, the money having been repaid.
[4] This entry is in Porter's own handwriting.

THE foregoing extracts, — extending over the brief period of a single year — from the *Diary* of Henslowe, the well-known theatrical manager, contain all the definite information which has reached us concerning Henry Porter. They show that he was a dramatist of reputation who wrote at least four plays, besides the one comedy that has come down to us; that he collaborated with Ben Jonson and Chettle, perhaps the only playwrights of his time, except Shakespeare, with whom he had much in common; and that like many other distinguished and even popular dramatists of the day he was frequently in need of money. It has been conjectured, on account of his evident familiarity with Oxford and its neighbourhood, if not on account of the special and peculiar melody of his blank verse, that the dramatist was identical with a bachelor of music of the same name mentioned by Wood. One solitary reference by a contemporary, which had escaped all previous seekers, has been found (and kindly communicated to me) by Mr. Bullen in the unique copy of Weever's *Epigrams* (1599), in the Bodleian Library. Weever writes "Ad Henricum Porter":—

> "Porter, I durst not mell with sacred writ,
> Nor woe the mistress 'fore I win the maid;
> For my young years are tasked; it's yet unfit,
> For youth as eld is never half so staid.
> Thyself which hath the sum of Art and Wit
> Thus much I know unto me would have said;
> Thy silver bell could not so sweetly sing
> If that too soon thou hadst begun her ring."

This feeble production proves that, as we should be inclined to judge from internal evidence, Porter was at the period of his dramatic activity a man of mature age. Henceforth he is no more seen; it cannot even be asserted that he lived into the seventeenth century.

The Two Angry Women of Abington was published in 1599. At that time the gradual invasion of Italian literature had culminated in the developed English drama as we all

know it. Marlowe and Greene and Peele, filled with the new wine of Italy, had run their short and brilliant Dyonisiac course and fallen dead by the wayside. But Shakespeare and Chapman and Webster were following more leisurely and soberly in the same path, and in less than ten years English literature had been revolutionised. Even the robust author of *Bartholomew Fair*, with whom Porter collaborated, and whose massive English temperament must have attracted him, had gulped down prodigiously the Mermaid wine of Italy. In this Italianised England, now producing dramas, often of wonderful power, nearly every day, almost the only dramatist of any eminence, so far as we can tell, who was absolutely unaffected by the rush of the stream that surrounded him was Henry Porter. This is the first impression that his play gives, as well as the last that remains, and this is alone enough to interest us and mark the strength of the man's individuality.

In French literature there are some writers who seem to be peculiarly free from all exotic influence, and who thus embody what is most native and aboriginal in the nation from whose heart they spring; we say that they reveal the Gallic spirit. In the same way certain writers seem to represent the special unadulterated characteristics of the English people, and embody what, for want of a better word, we may call the Anglo-Saxon spirit. Such are John Heywood in his Interludes, and the author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. More distinguished but far less exclusive representatives of the hearty and ponderous Anglo-Saxon spirit are Chaucer and Ben Jonson, Landor and Browning. Porter ranks high among the few pure-blooded men of this Anglo-Saxon breed.

His instrument is a double-bass; his style is grave and broad, finely modulated, indeed, and adroit, ennobling the comic theme with tones of solemnity which would befit classic tragedy, yet springing always from within, not from any artificial and outward impulsion; just as Jan Steen's broad comedy, by force of its vivacity and truth, sometimes reaches classical grace and simplicity. Porter is certainly a skilful and conscious artist. He uses blank verse and couplets, frequently intermixed and with remarkably harmonious effect, sometimes beginning a speech in blank verse and

gradually passing over into couplets with no awkward transition.

> " Father, when first I heard ye name a husband,
> At that same very time my spirits quickened.
> Despair before had killed them, they were dead:
> Because it was my hap so long to tarry,
> I was persuaded I should never marry;
> And sitting sewing thus upon the ground,
> I fell in trance of meditation;
> But coming to myself, 'O Lord, said I,
> Shall it be so? Must I unmarried die?'
> And being angry, father, farther said—
> 'Now, by Saint Anne, I will not die a maid!'"

His deep and modulated voice, lifted into no sudden fervours or exaltations, expresses the frank and conscious homeliness, the warm-blooded humanity, the English *heartiness* of the man. His manner is one with his matter. The quarrels of two neighbouring housewives, word combats that are the mere overflow of their own hot blood, the dissonance resolved at last in the marriage of their two children —that is the whole story of *The Two Angry Women of Abington.* If the interest never rises it is always sustained; all the persons are well characterised; the two neighbours, Barnes and Goursey, slow of speech, incapable of anger; their two sons, Frank and Philip, united by warm-hearted friendship; the serving-men with their various humours; the tender and pitiful Lady Smith; Mall, the wholesome, robust English girl, quick-witted, yet loving and sincere, with a brave openness quite unlike the sophisticated innocence which delighted a later generation in Congreve's Prue.—Many golden galleons of our drama lie sunken at the bottom of the sea, few that we would more gladly recover than the stout oak-built ships of Harry Porter.

H. E.

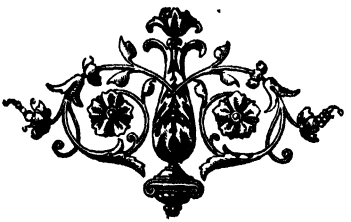


THE TWO ANGRY WOMEN OF ABINGTON.





THE *Pleasant Historie of the two angrie women of Abington* was published in 1599, "as played by the Right Honourable the Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral, his servants." Another edition followed in the same year. After this it appears to have been entirely neglected until Lamb pronounced that it was no whit inferior to Shakespeare's early comedies. It was edited by Dyce for the Percy Society, and included in Hazlitt's reprint of Dodsley's Old Plays. In the present edition an attempt has been made for the first time to introduce the customary division into acts and scenes.



PROLOGUE

GENTLEMEN, I come to ye like one that lacks and would borrow, but was loth to ask, lest he should be denied: I would ask, but I would ask to obtain; O, would I knew that manner of asking! To beg were base; and to couch low, and to carry an humble show of entreaty, were too dog-like, that fawns on his master to get a bone from his trencher: out, cur! I cannot abide it; to put on the shape and habit of this new world's new-found beggars, mis-termed soldiers, as thus: "Sweet gentlemen, let a poor scholar implore and exerate that you would make him rich in the possession of a mite of your favours, to keep him a true man in wit, and to pay for his lodging among the Muses! so God him help, he is driven to a most low estate! 'tis not unknown what service of words he hath been at; he lost his limbs in a late conflict of flout; a brave repulse and a hot assault it was, he doth protest, as ever he saw, since he knew what the report of a volley of jests were; he shall therefore desire you"——A plague upon it, each beadle disdained would whip him from your company. Well, gentlemen, I cannot tell how to get your favours better than by desert: then the worse luck, or the worse wit, or somewhat, for I shall not now deserve it. Well, then, I commit myself to my fortunes and your contents; contented to die, if your severe judgments shall judge me to be stung to death with the adder's hiss.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Master GOURSEY.
Master BARNES.
FRANCIS GOURSEY.
PHILIP BARNES.
SIR RALPH SMITH.
DICK COOMES, } Servants to Master
HODGE, } Goursey.
NICHOLAS, *alias* } Servant to Master
PROVERBS, } Barnes.
WILL, Servant to Sir Ralph Smith.
Boy.
Other Servants.

Mistress GOURSEY.
Mistress BARNES.
MALL BARNES.
Lady SMITH.

SCENE—ABINGTON and the Neighbourhood.



THE TWO ANGRY WOMEN OF ABINGTON.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.—Master BARNES'S *House.*

Enter Master GOURSEY *and his* Wife, *and* Master BARNES *and his* Wife, *with their two* Sons, FRANCIS *and* PHILIP, *and their two* Servants.

MAST. GOUR. Good Master Barnes, this entertain of yours,
So full of courtesy and rich delight,
Makes me misdoubt my poor ability
In quittance of this friendly courtesy.
Mast. Bar. O Master Goursey, neighbour-amity
Is such a jewel of high-reckoned worth,
As for the attain of it what would not I
Disburse, it is so precious in my thoughts!
Mast. Gour. Kind sir, near-dwelling amity indeed
Offers the heart's inquiry better view
Than love that's seated in a farther soil:
As prospectives,[1] the nearer that they be,

[1] Prospects, views, scenes in sight; a meaning of the word which is found in much later writers.—*Dyce.*

Yield better judgment to the judging eye;
Things seen far off are lessened in the eye,
When their true shape is seen being hard by.
Mast. Bar. True, sir, 'tis so; and truly I esteem
Mere[1] amity, familiar neighbourhood,
The cousin-german unto wedded love.
Mast. Gour. Ay, sir, there's surely some alliance 'twixt them,
For they have both the offspring from the heart:
Within the heart's-blood-ocean still are found
Jewels of amity and gems of love.
Mast. Bar. Ay, Master Goursey, I have in my time
Seen many shipwrecks of true honesty;
But incident such dangers ever are
To them that without compass sail so far:
Why, what need men to swim, when they may wade?—
But leave this talk, enough of this is said:
And, Master Goursey, in good faith, sir, welcome;—
And, Mistress Goursey, I am much in debt
Unto your kindness that would visit me.
Mis. Gour. O Master Barnes, you put me but in mind
Of that which I should say; 'tis we that are
Indebted to your kindness for this cheer:
Which debt that we may repay, I pray let's have
Sometimes your company at our homely house.
Mis. Bar. That, Mistress Goursey, you shall surely have;
He will be a bold guest, I warrant ye,
And bolder too with you than I would have him.
Mis. Gour. How, do you mean he will be bold with me?
Mis. Bar. Why, he will trouble you at home, forsooth,
Often call in, and ask ye how ye do;

[1] Pure.

And sit and chat with you all day till night,
And all night too, if he might have his will.
Mast. Bar. Ay, wife, indeed I thank her for her kindness;
She hath made me much good cheer passing that way.
Mis. Bar. Passing well-done of her, she is a kind wench.
I thank ye, Mistress Goursey, for my husband;
And if it hap your husband come our way
A-hunting or such ordinary sports,
I'll do as much for yours as you for mine.
Mast. Gour. Pray do, forsooth.—God's Lord, what means the woman?
She speaks it scornfully: faith, I care not;
Things are well-spoken, if they be well-taken. [*Aside.*
What, Mistress Barnes, is it not time to part?
Mis. Bar. What's a-clock, sirrah?
Nich. 'Tis but new-struck one.
Mast. Gour. I have some business in the town by three.
Mast. Bar. Till then let's walk into the orchard, sir.
What, can you play at tables?[1]
Mast. Gour. Yes, I can.
Mast. Bar. What, shall we have a game?
Mast. Gour. And if you please.
Mast. Bar. I'faith, content; we'll spend an hour so.
Sirrah, fetch the tables.[1]
Nich. I will, sir. [*Exit.*
Phil. Sirrah Frank, whilst they are playing here,
We'll to the green to bowls.
Fran. Philip, content. Coomes, come hither, sirrah:
When our fathers part, call us upon the green.
Philip, come, a rubber, and so leave.
Phil. Come on. [*Exeunt* PHILIP *and* FRANCIS.

[1] Backgammon. The audience were to suppose that the stage now represented an orchard; for be it remembered that there was no movable painted scenery in the theatres at the time when this play was produced.—*Dyce.*

Coomes. 'Sblood, I do not like the humour of these springals; they'll spend all their father's good at gaming. But let them trowl the bowls upon the green. I'll trowl the bowls in the buttery by the leave of God and Master Barnes: an his men be good fellows, so it is; if they be not, let them go snick up.[1] [*Exit.*

Enter NICHOLAS *with the tables.*

Mast. Bar. So, set them down.
Mistress Goursey, how do you like this game?

Mis. Gour. Well, sir.

Mast. Bar. Can ye play at it?

Mis. Gour. A little, sir.

Mast. Bar. Faith, so can my wife.

Mis. Gour. Why, then, Master Barnes, and if you please,
Our wives shall try the quarrel 'twixt us two,
And we'll look on.

Mast. Bar. I am content. What, woman, will you play?

Mis. Gour. I care not greatly.

Mis. Bar. Nor I, but that I think she'll play me false.

Mast. Gour. I'll see she shall not.

Mis. Bar. Nay, sir, she will be sure you shall not see;
You, of all men, shall not mark her hand;
She hath such close conveyance in her play.

Mast. Gour. Is she so cunning grown? Come, come, let's see.

Mis. Gour. Yea, Mistress Barnes, will ye not house your jests,
But let them roam abroad so carelessly?
Faith, if your jealous tongue utter another,
I'll cross ye with a jest, an ye were my mother.—
Come, shall we play? [*Aside.*

Mis. Bar. Ay, what shall we play a game?

[1] *i.e.* Let them go and be hanged. The expression "snick up" still survives, with reference to a noose, in nautical language.

Mis. Gour. A pound a game.
Mast. Gour. How, wife?
Mis. Gour. Faith, husband, not a farthing less.
Mast. Gour. It is too much; a shilling were good game.
Mis. Gour. No, we'll be ill-huswives once;
You have been oft ill husbands: let's alone.
Mast. Bar. Wife, will you play so much?
Mis. Bar. I would be loth to be so frank a gamester
As Mistress Goursey is; and yet for once
I'll play a pound a game as well as she.
Mast. Bar. Go to, you'll have your will.
[*Offers to go from them.*
Mis. Bar. Come, there's my stake.
Mis. Gour. And there's mine.
Mis. Bar. Throw for the dice. Ill luck! then they are yours.
Mast. Bar. Master Goursey, who says that gaming's bad,
When such good angels[1] walk 'twixt every cast?
Mast. Gour. This is not noble sport, but royal play.
Mast. Bar. It must be so, where royals[1] walk so fast.
Mis. Bar. Play right, I pray.
Mis. Gour. Why, so I do.
Mis. Bar. Where stands your man?
Mis. Gour. In his right place.
Mis. Bar. Good faith, I think ye play me foul an ace.
Mast. Bar. No, wife, she plays ye true.
Mis. Bar. Peace, husband, peace; I'll not be judged by you.
Mis. Gour. Husband, Master Barnes, pray, both go walk!
We cannot play if standers-by do talk.
Mast. Gour. Well, to your game; we will not trouble ye. [*Goes from them.*
Mis. Gour. Where stands your man now?

[1] Gold coins. They give occasion to innumerable puns in our early dramas.

Mis. Bar. Doth he not stand right?
Mis. Gour. It stands between the points.
Mis. Bar. And that's my spite.
But yet methinks the dice runs much uneven,
That I throw but deuce-ace and you eleven.
Mis. Gour. And yet you see that I cast down the hill.
Mis. Bar. Ay, I beshrew ye, 'tis not with my will.
Mis. Gour. Do ye beshrew me?
Mis. Bar. No, I beshrew the dice,
That turn you up more at once than me at twice.
Mis. Gour. Well, you shall see them turn for you anon.
Mis. Bar. But I care not for them, when your game is done.
Mis. Gour. My game! what game?
Mis. Bar. Your game, your game at tables.
Mis. Gour. Well, mistress, well; I have read Æsop's fables,
And know your moral meaning well enough.
Mis. Bar. Lo, you'll be angry now! here's good stuff.
Mast. Gour. How now, woman? who hath won the game?
Mis. Gour. Nobody yet.
Mast. Bar. Your wife's the fairest for't.
Mis. Bar. Ay, in your eye.
Mis. Gour. How do you mean?
Mis. Bar. He holds you fairer for't than I.
Mis. Gour. For what, forsooth?
Mis. Bar. Good gamester, for your game.
Mast. Bar. Well, try it out; 'tis all but in the bearing.[1]
Mis. Bar. Nay, if it come to bearing, she'll be best.
Mis. Gour. Why, you're as good a bearer as the rest.
Mis. Bar. Nay, that's not so; you bear one man too many.
Mis. Gour. Better do so than bear not any.
Mast. Bar. Beshrew me, but my wife's jests grow too bitter;

[1] A term of the game.

Plainer speeches for her were more fitter:
Malice lies embowelled in her tongue,
And new hatched hate makes every jest a wrong.
[*Aside.*

Mis. Gour. Look ye, mistress, now I hit ye.

Mis. Bar. Why, ay, you never use to miss a blot,[1]
Especially when it stands so fair to hit.

Mis. Gour. How mean ye, Mistress Barnes?

Mis. Bar. That Mistress Goursey's in the hitting vein.

Mis. Gour. I hit your man.

Mis. Bar. Ay, ay, my man, my man; but, had I known,
I would have had my man stood nearer home.

Mis. Gour. Why, had ye kept your man in his right place,
I should not then have hit him with an ace.

Mis. Bar. Right, by the Lord! a plague upon the bones!

Mis. Gour. And a hot mischief on the curser too!

Mast. Bar. How now, wife?

Mast. Gour. Why, what's the matter, woman?

Mis. Gour. It is no matter; I am—

Mis. Bar. Ay, you are—

Mis. Gour. What am I?

Mis. Bar. Why, that's as you will be ever.

Mis. Gour. That's every day as good as Barnes's wife.

Mis. Bar. And better too: then, what needs all this trouble?
A single horse is worse than that bears double.

Mast. Bar. Wife, go to, have regard to what you say;
Let not your words pass forth the verge of reason,
But keep within the bounds of modesty;
For ill-report doth like a bailiff stand,
To pound the straying and the wit-lost tongue,
And makes it forfeit into folly's hands.
Well, wife, you know it is no honest part

[1] Another term of the game.

To entertain such guests with jests and wrongs:
What will the neighbouring country vulgar say,
When as they hear that you fell out at dinner?
Forsooth, they'll call it a pot-quarrel straight;
The best they'll name it is a woman's jangling.
Go to, be ruled, be ruled.

Mis. Bar. God's Lord, be ruled, be ruled!
What, think ye I have such a baby's wit,
To have a rod's correction for my tongue?
School infancy! I am of age to speak,
And I know when to speak: shall I be chid
For such a—

Mis. Gour. What-a? nay, mistress, speak it out;
I scorn your stopped compares: compare not me
To any but your equals, Mistress Barnes.

Mast. Gour. Peace, wife, be quiet.

Mast. Bar. O, persuade, persuade!
Wife, Mistress Goursey, shall I win your thoughts
To composition of some kind effects?
Wife, if you love your credit, leave this strife,
And come shake hands with Mistress Goursey here.

Mis. Bar. Shall I shake hands? let her go shake her heels;
She gets nor hands nor friendship at my hands:
And so, sir, while I live, I will take heed
What guests I bid again unto my house.

Mast. Bar. Impatient woman, will you be so stiff
In this absurdness?

Mis. Bar. I am impatient now I speak;
But, sir, I'll tell you more another time:
Go to, I will not take it as I have done. [*Exit.*

Mis. Gour. Nay, she might stay; I will not long be here
To trouble her. Well, Master Barnes,
I am sorry that it was our haps to-day
To have our pleasures parted with this fray:
I am sorry too for all that is amiss,

Especially that you are moved in this;
But be not so, 'tis but a woman's jar:
Their tongues are weapons, words their blows of war;
'Twas but a while we buffeted, you saw,
And each of us was willing to withdraw;
There was no harm nor bloodshed, you did see:
Tush, fear us not, for we shall well agree.
I take my leave, sir. Come, kind-hearted man,
That speaks his wife so fair—ay, now and then;
I know you would not for an hundred pound
That I should hear your voice's churlish sound;
I know you have a far more milder tune
Than "Peace, be quiet, wife;" but I have done.
Will ye go home? the door directs the way;
But, if you will not, my duty is to stay. [*Exit.*

Mast. Bar. Ha, ha! why, here's a right woman, is there not?
They both have dined, yet see what stomachs they have!

Mast. Gour. Well, Master Barnes, we cannot do withal:[1]
Let us be friends still—

Mast. Bar. O Master Goursey, the mettle of our minds,
Having the temper of true reason in them,
Affords a better edge of argument
For the maintain of our familiar loves
Than the soft leaden wit of women can;
Wherefore with all the parts of neighbour-love
I do impart myself to Master Goursey.

Mast. Gour. And with exchange of love I do receive it:
Then here we'll part, partners of two cursed wives.

Mast. Bar. O, where shall we find a man so blessed that is not?
But come; your business and my home-affairs
Makes me deliver that unfriendly word
'Mongst friends—farewell.

Mast. Gour. Twenty farewells, sir.

[1] *i.e.* We cannot help it.

Mast. Bar. But hark ye, Master Goursey;
Look ye persuade at home, as I will do:
What, man! we must not always have them foes.
Mast. Gour. If I can help it.
Mast. Bar. God help, God help!
Women are even untoward creatures still. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Outside* Master BARNES'S *House.*

Enter PHILIP, FRANCIS, *and* Boy, *from bowling.*

Phil. Come on, Frank Goursey: you have had good luck
To win the game.
Fran. Why, tell me, is't not good,
That never played before upon your green?
Phil. 'Tis good, but that it cost me ten good crowns;
That makes it worse.
Fran. Let it not grieve thee, man; come o'er to us;
We will devise some game to make you win
Your money back again, sweet Philip.
Phil. And that shall be ere long, and if I live:
But tell me, Francis, what good horses have ye,
To hunt this summer?
Fran. Two or three jades, or so.
Phil. Be they but jades?
Fran. No, faith; my wag-string here
Did founder one the last time that he rid—
The best grey nag that ever I laid my leg over.
Boy. You mean the flea-bitten.
Fran. Good sir, the same.
Boy. And was the same the best that e'er you rid on?
Fran. Ay, was it, sir.
Boy. I' faith, it was not, sir.
Fran. No! where had I one so good?
Boy. One of my colour, and a better too.

Fran. One of your colour? I ne'er remember him;
One of that colour!

Boy. Or of that complexion.

Fran. What's that ye call complexion in a horse?

Boy. The colour, sir.

Fran. Set me a colour on your jest, or I will—

Boy. Nay, good sir, hold your hands!

Fran. What, shall we have it?

Boy. Why, sir, I cannot paint.

Fran. Well, then, I can;
And I shall find a pencil for ye, sir.

Boy. Then I must find the table,[1] if you do.

Fran. A whoreson, barren, wicked urchin!

Boy. Look how you chafe! you would be angry more,
If I should tell it you.

Fran. Go to, I'll anger ye, and if you do not.

Boy. Why, sir, the horse that I do mean
Hath a leg both straight and clean,
That hath nor spaven, splint, nor flaw,
But is the best that ever ye saw;
A pretty rising knee—O knee!
It is as round as round may be;
The full flank makes the buttock round:
This palfrey standeth on no ground,
When as my master's on her back,
If that he once do say but, tack:
And if he prick her, you shall see
Her gallop amain, she is so free;
And if he give her but a nod,
She thinks it is a riding-rod;
And if he'll have her softly go,
Then she trips it like a doe;
She comes so easy with the rein,
A twine-thread turns her back again;
And truly I did ne'er see yet
A horse play proudlier on the bit:

[1] Writing tablet.

My master with good managing
Brought her first unto the ring;[1]
He likewise taught her to corvet,
To run, and suddenly to set;
She's cunning in the wild-goose race,
Nay, she's apt to every pace;
And to prove her colour good,
A flea, enamoured of her blood,
Digged for channels in her neck,
And there made many a crimson speck:
I think there's none that use to ride
But can her pleasant trot abide;
She goes so even upon the way,
She will not stumble in a day;
And when my master—

Fran. What do I?

Boy. Nay, nothing, sir.

Phil. O, fie, Frank, fie!
Nay, nay, your reason hath no justice now,
I must needs say; persuade him first to speak,
Then chide him for it! Tell me, pretty wag,
Where stands this prancer, in what inn or stable?
Or hath thy master put her out to run,
Then in what field, what champion,[2] feeds this courser,
This well-paced, bonny steed that thou so praisest?

Boy. Faith, sir, I think—

Fran. Villain, what do ye think?

Boy. I think that you, sir, have been asked by many,
But yet I never heard that ye told any.

Phil. Well, boy, then I will add one more to many,
And ask thy master where this jennet feeds.
Come, Frank, tell me—nay, prythee, tell me, Frank,
My good horse-master, tell me—by this light,

[1] *i.e.* Taught her to tread the ring,—to perform various movements in different directions within a ring marked out on a piece of ground.—*Dyce.*

[2] A form of "campaign."

I will not steal her from thee; if I do,
Let me be held a felon to thy love.

Fran. No, Philip, no.

Phil. What, wilt thou wear a point[1] but with one tag? Well, Francis, well, I see you are a wag.

Enter COOMES.

Coomes. 'Swounds, where be these timber-turners, these trowl-the-bowls, these green-men, these—

Fran. What, what, sir?

Coomes. These bowlers, sir.

Fran. Well, sir, what say you to bowlers?

Coomes. Why, I say they cannot be saved.

Fran. Your reason, sir?

Coomes. Because they throw away their souls at every mark.

Fran. Their souls! how mean ye?

Phil. Sirrah, he means the soul of the bowl.

Fran. Lord, how his wit holds bias like a bowl!

Coomes. Well, which is the bias?

Fran. This next to you.

Coomes. Nay, turn it this way, then the bowl goes true.

Boy. Rub, rub!

Coomes. Why rub?

Boy. Why, you overcast the mark, and miss the way.

Coomes. Nay, boy, I use to take the fairest of my play.

Phil. Dick Coomes, methinks thou art very pleasant: Where got'st thou this merry humour?

Coomes. In your father's cellar, the merriest place in th' house.

Phil. Then you have been carousing hard?

Coomes. Yes, faith, 'tis our custom, when your father's men and we meet.

Phil. Thou art very welcome thither, Dick.

Coomes. By God, I thank ye, sir, I thank ye, sir: by

[1] Points were the tagged laces used to attach the hose or breeches to the doublet.

God, I have a quart of wine for ye, sir, in any place of the world. There shall not a servingman in Barkshire fight better for ye than I will do, if you have any quarrel on hand: you shall have the maidenhead of my new sword; I paid a quarter's wages for't, by Jesus.

Phil. O, this meat-failer Dick!
How well't has made the apparel of his wit,
And brought it into fashion of an honour!
Prythee, Dick Coomes, but tell me how thou dost?

Coomes. Faith, sir, like a poor man of service.

Phil. Or servingman.

Coomes. Indeed, so called by the vulgar.

Phil. Why, where the devil hadst thou that word?

Coomes. O, sir, you have the most eloquent ale in all the world; our blunt soil affords none such.

Fran. Philip, leave talking with this drunken fool. Say, sirrah, where's my father?

Coomes. "Marry, I thank ye for my very good cheer,—O Lord, it is not so much worth.—You see I am bold with ye.—Indeed, you are not so bold as welcome; I pray ye, come oft'ner.—Truly, I shall trouble ye." All these ceremonies are despatched between them, and they are gone.

Fran. Are they so?

Coomes. Ay, before God, are they.

Fran. And wherefore came not you to call me then?

Coomes. Because I was loth to change my game.

Fran. What game?

Coomes. You were at one sort of bowls as I was at another.

Phil. Sirrah, he means the butt'ry bowls of beer.

Coomes. By God, sir, we tickled it.

Fran. Why, what a swearing keeps this drunken ass? Canst thou not say but swear at every word?

Phil. Peace, do not mar his humour, prythee, Frank.

Coomes. Let him alone; he's a springal;[1] he knows not what belongs to an oath.

[1] Lively fellow.

Fran. Sirrah, be quiet, or I do protest——

Coomes. Come, come, what do you protest?

Fran. By heaven, to crack your crown.

Coomes. To crack my crown! I lay ye a crown of that, lay it down, an ye dare; nay, 'sblood, I'll venture a quarter's wages of that. Crack my crown, quotha!

Fran. Will ye not yet be quiet? will ye urge me?

Coomes. Urge ye, with a pox! who urges ye? You might have said so much to a clown, or one that had not been o'er the sea to see fashions: I have, I tell ye true; and I know what belongs to a man. Crack my crown, an ye can.

Fran. An I can, ye rascal!

Phil. Hold, hair-brain, hold! dost thou not see he's drunk?

Coomes. Nay, let him come: though he be my master's son, I am my master's man, and a man is a man in any ground of England.
Come an he dares, a comes upon his death:
I will not budge an inch, no, 'sblood, will I not.

Fran. Will ye not?

Phil. Stay, prythee, Frank. Coomes, dost thou hear?

Coomes. Hear me no hears: stand away, I'll trust none of you all. If I have my back against a cartwheel, I would not care if the devil came.

Phil. Why, ye fool, I am your friend.

Coomes. Fool on your face! I have a wife.

Fran. She's a whore, then.

Coomes. She's as honest as Nan Lawson.

Phil. What's she?

Coomes. One of his whores.

Phil. Why, hath he so many?

Coomes. Ay, as many as there be churches in London.

Phil. Why, that's a hundred and nine.

Boy. Faith, he lies a hundred.

Phil. Then thou art a witness to nine.

Boy. No, by God, I'll be witness to none.

Coomes. Now do I stand like the George at Colebrook.

Boy. No, thou stand'st like the Bull at St. Alban's.

Coomes. Boy, ye lie—the Horns.[1]

Boy. The bull's bitten; see, how he butts!

Phil. Coomes, Coomes, put up;[2] my friend and thou art friends.

Coomes. I'll hear him say so first.

Phil. Frank, prythee, do; be friends, and tell him so.

Fran. Go to, I am.

Boy. Put up, sir; an ye be a man, put up.

Coomes. I am easily persuaded, boy.

Phil. Ah, ye mad slave!

Coomes. Come, come, a couple of whoremasters I found ye, and so I leave ye. [*Exit.*

Phil. Lo, Frank, dost thou not see he's drunk,
That twits thee with thy disposition?

Fran. What disposition?

Phil. Nan Lawson, Nan Lawson.

Fran. Nay, then—

Phil. Go to, ye wag, 'tis well:
If ever ye get a wife, i' faith I'll tell.
Sirrah, at home we have a servingman;
He is not humoured bluntly as Coomes is,
Yet his condition[3] makes me often merry:
I'll tell thee, sirrah, he's a fine neat fellow,
A spruce slave; I warrant ye, he will have
His crewel garters cross about the knee,
His woollen hose as white as th' driven snow,
His shoes dry-leather neat, and tied with red ribbons,
A nosegay bound with laces in his hat—
Bridelaces,[4] sir—and his hat all green,
Green coverlet for such a grass-green wit.

[1] These are the names of taverns. Sheathe your sword.

[3] *i.e.* Quality, disposition.

[4] Fringed strings of silk or worsted, given to the friends who attended the bridal party to bind up the rosemary sprigs they carried, and after the ceremony worn as ornaments on the hat, or twisted in the hair.

"The goose that grazeth on the green," quoth he,
"May I eat on, when you shall buried be!"
All proverbs in his speech, he's proverbs all.
Fran. Why speaks he proverbs?
Phil. Because he would speak truth,
And proverbs, you'll confess, are old-said sooth.
Fran. I like this well, and one day I will see him·
But shall we part?
Phil. Not yet, I'll bring ye somewhat on your way,
And as we go, between your boy and you
I'll know where that brave prancer stands at livery.
Fran. Come, come, you shall not.
Phil. I' faith, I will. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.—Master BARNES'S *Garden.*

Enter Master BARNES *and his* Wife.



AST. BAR. Wife, in my mind to-day
you were to blame,
Although my patience did not blame ye
for it:
Methought the rules of love and neigh-
bourhood
Did not direct your thoughts; all indiscreet
Were your proceedings in the entertain
Of them that I invited to my house.
Nay, stay, I do not chide, but counsel, wife,
And in the mildest manner that I may:
You need not view me with a servant's eye,
Whose vassal senses tremble at the look
Of his displeasèd master. O my wife,
You are myself! when self sees fault in self,
Self is sin-obstinate, if self amend not:
Indeed, I saw a fault in thee myself,
And it hath set a foil upon thy fame,
Not as the foil doth grace the diamond.

Mis. Bar. What fault, sir, did you see in me to-day?

Mast. Bar. O, do not set the organ of thy voice
On such a grunting key of discontent!
Do not deform the beauty of thy tongue
With such misshapen answers. Rough wrathful words
Are bastards got by rashness in the thoughts:

Fair demeanours are virtue's nuptial babes,
The offspring of the well-instructed soul;
O, let them call thee mother, then, my wife!
So seem not barren of good courtesy.

Mis. Bar. So; have ye done?

Mast. Bar. Ay, and I had done well,
If you would do what I advise for well.

Mis. Bar. What's that?

Mast. Bar. Which is, that you would be good friends
With Mistress Goursey.

Mis. Bar. With Mistress Goursey!

Mast. Bar. Ay, sweet wife.

Mis. Bar. Not so, sweet husband.

Mast. Bar. Could you but show me any grounded cause.

Mis. Bar. The grounded cause I ground, because I will not.

Mast. Bar. Your will hath little reason, then, I think.

Mis. Bar. Yes, sir, my reason equalleth my will.

Mast. Bar. Let's hear your reason, for your will is great.

Mis. Bar. Why, for I will not.

Mast. Bar. Is all your reason "for I will not," wife?
Now, by my soul, I held ye for more wise,
Discreet, and of more temp'rature in sense,
Than in a sullen humour to affect
That woman's will-born, common scholar phrase:
Oft have I heard a timely-married girl,
That newly left to call her mother mam,
Her father dad: but yesterday come from
"That's my good girl, God send thee a good husband!"
And now being taught to speak the name of husband,
Will, when she would be wanton in her will,
If her husband asked her why, say "for I will."
Have I chid men for an unmanly choice,
That would not fit their years? have I seen thee
Pupil such green young things, and with thy counsel
Tutor their wits? and art thou now infected

With this disease of imperfection?
I blush for thee, ashamèd at thy shame.
Mis. Bar. A shame on her that makes thee rate me so!
Mast. Bar. O black-mouthed rage, thy breath is boisterous,
And thou mak'st virtue shake at this high storm!
She is of good report; I know thou know'st it.
Mis. Bar. She is not, nor I know not, but I know
That thou dost love her, therefore think'st her so;
Thou bear'st with her because she bears with thee.
Thou may'st be ashamed to stand in her defence:
She is a strumpet, and thou art no honest man
To stand in her defence against thy wife.
If I catch her in my walk, now, by Cock's [1] bones,
I'll scratch out both her eyes.
Mast. Bar. O God!
Mis. Bar. Nay, never say "O God" for the matter:
Thou art the cause; thou bad'st her to my house,
Only to blear the eyes of Goursey, did'st not?
But I will send him word, I warrant thee,
And ere I sleep too, trust upon it, sir. [*Exit.*
Mast. Bar. Methinks this is a mighty fault in her;
I could be angry with her: O, if I be so,
I shall but put a link unto a torch,
And so give greater light to see her fault.
I'll rather smother it in melancholy:
Nay, wisdom bids me shun that passion;
Then I will study for a remedy.
I have a daughter,—now, Heaven invocate
She be not of like spirit as her mother!
If so, she'll be a plague unto her husband,
If that he be not patient and discreet,
For that I hold the ease of all such trouble.
Well, well, I would my daughter had a husband,
For I would see how she would demean herself
In that estate; it may be, ill enough,—

[1] A corruption of "God's."

And, so God shall help me, well-remembered now!
Frank Goursey is his father's son and heir:
A youth that in my heart I have good hope on;
My senses say a match, my soul applauds
The motion: O, but his lands are great,
He will look high; why, I will strain myself
To make her dowry equal with his land.
Good faith, an 'twere a match, 'twould be a means
To make their mothers friends. I'll call my daughter,
To see how she's disposed to marriage.—
Mall, where are ye?

Enter MALL.

Mall. Father, here I am.

Mast. Bar. Where is your mother?

Mall. I saw her not, forsooth, since you and she
Went walking both together to the garden.

Mast. Bar. Dost thou hear me, girl? I must dispute with thee.

Mall. Father, the question then must not be hard,
For I am very weak in argument.

Mast. Bar. Well, this it is; I say 'tis good to marry.

Mall. And this say I, 'tis not good to marry.

Mast. Bar. Were it not good, then all men would not marry;
But now they do.

Mall. Marry, not all; but it is good to marry.

Mast. Bar. It is both good and bad; how can this be?

Mall. Why, it is good to them that marry well;
To them that marry ill, no greater hell.

Mast. Bar. If thou might marry well, wouldst thou agree?

Mall. I cannot tell; Heaven must appoint for me.

Mast. Bar. Wench, I am studying for thy good indeed.

Mall. My hopes and duty wish your thoughts good speed.

Mast. Bar. But tell me, wench, hast thou a mind to marry?

Mall. This question is too hard for bashfulness;
And, father, now ye pose my modesty.
I am a maid, and when ye ask me thus,
I, like a maid, must blush, look pale and wan,
And then look red again; for we change colour,
As our thoughts change. With true-faced passion
Of modest maidenhead I could adorn me,
And to your question make a sober courtsey,
And with close-clipped civility be silent;
Or else say "No, forsooth," or "Ay, forsooth."
If I said, "No, forsooth," I lied forsooth:
To lie upon myself were deadly sin,
Therefore I will speak truth and shame the devil.
Father, when first I heard ye name a husband,
At that same very time my spirits quickened.
Despair before had killed them, they were dead:
Because it was my hap so long to tarry,
I was persuaded I should never marry;
And sitting sewing thus upon the ground,
I fell in trance of meditation;
But coming to myself, "O Lord," said I,
"Shall it be so? must I unmarried die?"
And, being angry, father, farther said—
"Now, by Saint Anne, I will not die a maid!"
Good faith, before I came to this ripe growth,
I did accuse the labouring time of sloth;
Methought the year did run but slow about,
For I thought each year ten I was without.
Being fourteen and toward the tother year,
Good Lord, thought I, fifteen will ne'er be here!
For I have heard my mother say that then
Pretty maids were fit for handsome men:
Fifteen past, sixteen, and seventeen too,
What, thought I, will not this husband do?
Will no man marry me? have men forsworn

Such beauty and such youth? shall youth be worn
As rich men's gowns, more with age than use?
Why, then I let restrainèd fancy loose,
And bad it gaze for pleasure; then love swore me
To do whate'er my mother did before me;
Yet, in good faith, I have been very loth,
But now it lies in you to save my oath:
If I shall have a husband, get him quickly,
For maids that wear cork shoes may step awry.

Mast. Bar. Believe me, wench, I do not reprehend thee,
But for this pleasant answer do commend thee.
I must confess, love doth thee mighty wrong,
But I will see thee have thy right ere long;
I know a young man, whom I hold most fit
To have thee both for living and for wit:
I will go write about it presently.

Mall. Good father, do. [*Exit* BARNES
O God, methinks I should
Wife it as fine as any woman could!
I could carry a port to be obeyed,
Carry a mastering eye upon my maid,
With "Minion, do your business, or I'll make ye,"
And to all house-authority betake me.
O God! would I were married!—By my troth,
But if I be not, I swear I'll keep my oath.

Enter Mistress BARNES.

Mis. Bar. How now, minion, where have you been gadding?

Mall. Forsooth, my father called me forth to him.

Mis. Bar. Your father! and what said he to ye, I pray?

Mall. Nothing, forsooth.

Mis. Bar. Nothing! that cannot be; something he said.

Mall. Ay, something that as good as nothing was.

Mis. Bar. Come, let me hear that something-nothing, then.

Mall. Nothing but of a husband for me, mother.

Mis. Bar. A husband! that was something; but what husband?

Mall. Nay, faith, I know not, mother: would I did!

Mis. Bar. Ay, "would ye did!" i' faith, are ye so hasty?

Mall. Hasty, mother! why, how old am I?

Mis. Bar. Too young to marry.

Mall. Nay, by the mass, ye lie.
Mother, how old were you when you did marry?

Mis. Bar. How old soe'er I was, yet you shall tarry.

Mall. Then the worse for me. Hark, mother, hark!
The priest forgets that e'er he was a clerk:
When you were at my years, I'll hold my life,
Your mind was to change maidenhead for wife.
Pardon me, mother, I am of your mind,
And, by my troth, I take it but by kind.[1]

Mis. Bar. Do ye hear, daughter? you shall stay my leisure.

Mall. Do you hear, mother? would you stay from pleasure,
When ye have mind to it? Go to, there's no wrong
Like this, to let maids lie alone so long:
Lying alone they muse but in their beds,
How they might lose their long-kept maidenheads.
This is the cause there is so many scapes,
For women that are wise will not lead apes
In hell[2]: I tell ye, mother, I say true;
Therefore come husband: maidenhead adieu! [*Exit.*

[1] *i.e.* Nature.

[2] "For 'tis an old proverb, and you know it well,
That women dying maids, lead apes in hell."
The London Prodigal, l. ii. 27–8.

Mis. Bar. Well, lusty guts, I mean to make ye stay,
And set some rubs in your mind's smoothest way.

Enter PHILIP.

Phil. Mother—

Mis. Bar. How now, sirrah; where have you been walking?

Phil. Over the meads, half-way to Milton, mother,
To bear my friend, Frank Goursey, company.

Mis. Bar. Where's your blue coat,[1] your sword and buckler, sir?
Get you such like habit for a serving-man,
If you will wait upon the brat of Goursey.

Phil. Mother, that you are moved, this makes me wonder;
When I departed, I did leave ye friends:
What undigested jar hath since betided?

Mis. Bar. Such as almost doth choke thy mother, boy,
And stifles her with the conceit of it;
I am abused, my son, by Goursey's wife.

Phil. By Mistress Goursey.

Mis. Bar. Mistress Flirt—yea, foul strumpet,
Light-a-love, short-heels! Mistress Goursey
Call her again, and thou wert better no.

Phil. O my dear mother, have some patience!

Mis. Bar. Ay, sir, have patience, and see your father
To rifle up the treasure of my love,
And play the spendthrift upon such an harlot!
This same will make me have patience, will it not?

Phil. This same is women's most impatience:
Yet, mother, I have often heard ye say,
That you have found my father temperate,
And ever free from such affections.

Mis. Bar. Ay, till my too much love did glut his thoughts,
And make him seek for change.

[1] The common dress of serving-men.

Phil. O, change your mind!
My father bears more cordial love to you.
Mis. Bar. Thou liest, thou liest, for he loves Goursey's wife,
Not me.
Phil. Now I swear, mother, you are much to blame;
I durst be sworn he loves you as his soul.
Mis. Bar. Wilt thou be pampered by affection?
Will nature teach thee such vile perjury?
Wilt thou be sworn, ay, forsworn, careless boy?
And if thou swear't, I say he loves me not.
Phil. Mother, he loves ye but too well, I swear,
Unless ye knew much better how to use him.
Mis. Bar. Doth he so, sir? thou unnatural boy!
"Too well," sayest thou? that word shall cost thee somewhat:
O monstrous! have I brought thee up to this?
"Too well!" O unkind, wicked, and degenerate,
Hast thou the heart to say so of thy mother?
Well, God will plague thee for't, I warrant thee:
Out on thee, villain! fie upon thee, wretch!
Out of my sight, out of my sight, I say!
Phil. This air is pleasant, and doth please me well,
And here I will stay.
Mis. Bar. Wilt thou, stubborn villain?

Re-enter Master BARNES.

Mast. Bar. How now, what's the matter?
Mis. Bar. Thou sett'st thy son to scoff and mock at me:
Is't not sufficient I am wronged of thee,
But he must be an agent to abuse me?
Must I be subject to my cradle too?
O God, O God, amend it! [*Exit.*
Mast. Bar. Why, how now, Philip? is this true, my son?
Phil. Dear father, she is much impatient:

Ne'er let that hand assist me in my need,
If I more said than that she thought amiss
To think that you were so licentious given;
And thus much more, when she inferred it more,
I swore an oath you loved her but too well:
In that as guilty I do hold myself.
Now that I come to more considerate trial,
I know my fault: I should have borne with her:
Blame me for rashness, then, not for want of duty.

Mast. Bar. I do absolve thee; and come hither, Philip:
I have writ a letter unto Master Goursey,
And I will tell thee the contents thereof;
But tell me first, think'st thou Frank Goursey loves thee?

Phil. If that a man devoted to a man,
Loyal, religious in love's hallowed vows—
If that a man that is sole laboursome
To work his own thoughts to his friend's delight,
May purchase good opinion with his friend,
Then I may say, I have done this so well,
That I may think Frank Goursey loves me well.

Mast. Bar. 'Tis well; and I am much deceived in him,
And if he be not sober, wise, and valiant.

Phil. I hope my father takes me for thus wise,
I will not glue myself in love to one
That hath not some desert of virtue in him:
Whate'er you think of him, believe me, father,
He will be answerable to your thoughts
In any quality commendable.

Mast. Bar. Thou cheer'st my hopes in him; and, in good faith,
Thou'st made my love complete unto thy friend:
Philip, I love him, and I love him so,
I could afford him a good wife, I know.

Phil. Father, a wife!

Mast. Bar. Philip, a wife

soft fire makes sweet malt; not too fast for falling; there's no haste to hang true men.

Phil. Father, we ha't, ye see, we ha't. Now will I see if my memory will serve for some proverbs too. O—a painted cloth were as well worth a shilling as a thief worth a halter; well, after my hearty commendations, as I was at the making hereof, so it is, that I hope as you speed, so you're sure; a swift horse will tire, but he that trots easily will endure. You have most learnedly proverbed it, commending the virtue of patience or forbearance, but yet, you know, forbearance is no quittance.

Nich. I promise ye, Master Philip, you have spoken as true as steel.

Phil. Father, there's a proverb well applied.

Nich. And it seemeth unto me, ay, it seems to me, that you, Master Philip, mock me: do you not know, *qui mocat mocabitur?* mock age, and see how it will prosper.

Phil. Why ye whoreson proverb-book bound up in folio,
Have ye no other sense to answer me
But every word a proverb? no other English?
Well, I'll fulfil a proverb on thee straight.

Nich. What is it, sir?

Phil. I'll fetch my fist from thine ear.

Nich. Bear witness, he threatens me!

Phil. That same is the coward's common proverb.
But come, come, sirrah, tell me where Hugh is.

Nich. I may an I will; I need not, except I list; you shall not command me, you give me neither meat, drink, nor wages; I am your father's man, and a man's a man, an a have but a hose on his head; do not misuse me so, do not; for though he that is bound must obey, yet he that will not tarry, may run away—so he may.

Mast. Bar. Peace, Nick, I'll see he shall use thee well;
Go to, peace, sirrah: here, Nick, take this letter,
Carry it to him to whom it is directed.

Nich. To whom is it?

Mast. Bar. Why, read it: canst thou read?

Nich. Forsooth, though none of the best, yet meanly.

Mast. Bar. Why, dost thou not use it?

Nich. Forsooth, as use makes perfectness, so seldom seen is soon forgotten.

Mast. Bar. Well-said: but go: it is to Master Goursey.

Phil. Now, sir, what proverb have ye to deliver a letter?

Nich. What need you to care? who speaks to you? you may speak when ye are spoken to, and keep your wind to cool your pottage. Well, well, you are my master's son, and you look for his land; but they that hope for dead men's shoes may hap go barefoot: take heed, as soon goes the young sheep to the pot as the old. I pray God save my master's life, for seldom comes the better!

Phil. O, he hath given it me! Farewell, Proverbs.

Nich. Farewell, frost.[1]

Phil. Shall I fling an old shoe after ye?

Nich. No; you should say, God send fair weather after me!

Phil. I mean for good luck.

Nich. A good luck on ye! [*Exit.*

Mast. Bar. Alas, poor fool! he uses all his wit.
Philip, in faith this mirth hath cheerèd thought,
And cosened it of his right play of passion.
Go after Nick, and when thou think'st he's there,
Go in and urge to that which I have writ:
I'll in these meadows make a circling walk,
And in my meditation conjure so,
As that same fiend of thought, self-eating anger,
Shall by my spells of reason vanish quite:
Away, and let me hear from thee to-night.

Phil. To-night! yes, that you shall: but hark ye, father;

[1] See Hazlitt's *Proverbs*, 1869, p. 128.

Look that you my sister waking keep,
For Frank, I swear, shall kiss her, ere I sleep. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Insiae* Master GOURSEY'S *House.*

Enter FRANCIS *and* Boy.

Fran. I am very dry with walking o'er the green.—Butler, some beer! Sirrah, call the butler.

Boy. Nay, faith, sir, we must have some smith to give the butler a drench, or cut him in the forehead, for he hath got a horse's disease, namely the staggers; to-night he's a good huswife, he reels all that he wrought to-day; and he were good now to play at dice, for he casts[1] excellent well.

Fran. How mean'st thou? is he drunk?

Boy. I cannot tell; but I am sure he hath more liquor in him than a whole dicker[2] of hides; he's soaked thoroughly, i' faith:

Fran. Well, go and call him; bid him bring me drink.

Boy. I will, sir. [*Exit.*

Fran. My mother pouts, and will look merrily
Neither upon my father nor on me:
He says she fell out with Mistress Barnes to-day;
Then I am sure they'll not be quickly friends.
Good Lord, what kind of creatures women are!
Their love is lightly[3] won and lightly lost;
And then their hate is deadly and extreme:
He that doth take a wife betakes himself
To all the cares and troubles of the world.
Now her disquietness doth grieve my father,
Grieves me, and troubles all the house besides.
What, shall I have some drink? [*Horn sounded within*]—
How now? a horn!

[1] Vomits. [2] Ten. [3] Easily.

Belike the drunken knave is fall'n asleep,
And now the boy doth wake him with his horn.

Re-enter Boy.

How now, sirrah, where's the butler?

Boy. Marry, sir, where he was even now, asleep; but I waked him, and when he waked he thought he was in Master Barnes's buttery, for he stretched himself thus, and yawning, said, "Nick, honest Nick, fill a fresh bowl of ale; stand to it, Nick, an thou beest a man of God's making, stand to it;" and then I winded my horn, and he's horn-mad.

Enter HODGE.

Hod. Boy, hey! ho, boy! an thou beest a man, draw —O, here's a blessed moonshine, God be thanked!— Boy, is not this goodly weather for barley?

Boy. Spoken like a right malstter, Hodge; but dost thou hear? thou art not drunk?

Hod. No, I scorn that, i' faith.

Boy. But thy fellow Dick Coomes is mightily drunk.

Hod. Drunk! a plague on it, when a man cannot carry his drink well! 'sblood, I'll stand to it.

Boy. Hold, man; see, an thou canst stand first.

Hod. Drunk! he's a beast, an he be drunk; there's no man that is a sober man will be drunk; he's a boy, an he be drunk.

Boy. No, he's a man as thou art.

Hod. Thus 'tis, when a man will not be ruled by his friends: I bad him keep under the lee, but he kept down the weather two bows; I told him he would be taken with a planet, but the wisest of us all may fall.

Boy. True, Hodge. [Boy *trips him.*

Hod. Whoop! lend me thy hand, Dick, I am fallen into a well; lend me thy hand, I shall be drowned else.

Boy. Hold fast by the bucket, Hodge.

Hod. A rope on it!

Boy. Ay, there is a rope on it; but where art thou, Hodge?

Hod. In a well; I prithee, draw up.

Boy. Come, give up thy body; wind up, hoist!

Hod. I am over head and ears.

Boy. In all, Hodge, in all.

Fran. How loathsome is this beast-man's shape to me,
This mould of reason so unreasonable!—
Sirrah, why dost thou trip him down, seeing he's drunk?

Boy. Because, sir, I would have drunkards cheap.

Fran. How mean ye?

Boy. Why, they say that, when anything hath a fall, it is cheap; and so of drunkards.

Fran. Go to, help him up: [*Knocking without*] but, hark, who knocks? [Boy *goes to the door and returns.*

Boy. Sir, here's one of Master Barnes's men with a letter to my old master.

Fran. Which of them is it?

Boy. They call him Nicholas, sir.

Fran. Go, call him in. [*Exit* Boy.

Enter COOMES.

Coomes. By your leave, ho! How now, young master, how is't?

Fran. Look ye, sirrah, where your fellow lies;
He's in a fine taking, is he not?

Coomes. Whoop, Hodge! where art thou, man, where art thou?

Hod. O, in a well.

Coomes. In a well, man! nay, then, thou art deep in understanding.

Fran. Ay, once to-day you were almost so, sir.

Coomes. Who, I! go to, young master, I do not like this humour in ye, I tell ye true; give every man his due, and give him no more: say I was in such a case! go to, 'tis the greatest indignation that can be offered to a man; and, but a man's more godlier given, you were able to

make him swear out his heart-blood. What, though that honest Hodge have cut his finger here, or, as some say, cut a feather: what, though he be mump, misled, blind, or as it were—'tis no consequent to me: you know I have drunk all the alehouses in Abington dry, and laid the taps on the tables, when I had done: 'sblood, I'll challenge all the true rob-pots in Europe to leap up to the chin in a barrel of beer, and if I cannot drink it down to my foot, ere I leave, and then set the tap in the midst of the house, and then turn a good turn on the toe on it, let me be counted nobody, a pingler,[1]—nay, let me be bound to drink nothing but small-beer seven years after —and I had as lief be hanged.

Enter NICHOLAS.

Fran. Peace, sir, I must speak with one.—Nicholas, I think, your name is.

Nich. True as the skin between your brows.

Fran. Well, how doth thy master?

Nich. Forsooth, live, and the best doth no better.

Fran. Where is the letter he hath sent me?

Nich. Ecce signum! here it is.

Fran. 'Tis right as Philip said, 'tis a fine fool [*Aside*].—
This letter is directed to my father;
I'll carry it to him. Dick Coomes, make him drink.
[*Exit.*

Coomes. Ay, I'll make him drunk, an he will.

Nich. Not so, Richard; it is good to be merry and wise.

Coomes. Well, Nicholas, as thou art Nicholas, welcome; but as thou art Nicholas and a boon companion, ten times welcome. Nicholas, give me thy hand: shall we be merry? an we shall, say but we shall, and let the first word stand.

Nich. Indeed, as long lives the merry man as the sad; an ounce of debt will not pay a pound of care.

[1] Bungler.

Coomes. Nay, a pound of care will not pay an ounce of debt.

Nich. Well, 'tis a good horse never stumbles: but who lies here?

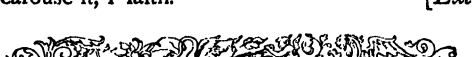
Coomes. 'Tis our Hodge, and I think he lies asleep: you made him drunk at your house to-day; but I'll pepper some of you for't.

Nich. Ay, Richard, I know you'll put a man over the shoes, and if you can; but he's a fool will take more than will do him good.

Coomes. 'Sblood, ye shall take more than will do ye good, or I'll make ye clap under the table.

Nich. Nay, I hope, as I have temperance to forbear drink, so have I patience to endure drink: I'll do as company doth; for when a man doth to Rome come, he must do as there is done.

Coomes. Ha, my resolved Nick, froligozene! Fill the pot, hostess; 'swouns, you whore! Harry Hook's a rascal. Help me, but carry my fellow Hodge in, and we'll carouse it, i' faith. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE III.—*Before* Master GOURSEY'S *House.*

Enter PHILIP.

Phil. By this, I think, the letter is delivered,
And 'twill be shortly time that I step in,
And woo their favours for my sister's fortune:
And yet I need not; she may do as well,
But yet not better, as the case doth stand
Between our mothers; it may make them friends;
Nay, I would swear that she would do as well,
Were she a stranger to one quality;
But they are so acquainted, they'll ne'er part.
Why, she will flout the devil, and make blush
The boldest face of man that e'er man saw;

He that hath best opinion of his wit,
And hath his brainpan fraught with bitter jests,
Or of his own, or stol'n, or howsoever,
Let him stand ne'er so high in his own conceit,
Her wit's a sun that melts him down like butter,
And makes him sit at table pancake-wise,
Flat, flat, God knows, and ne'er a word to say;
Yet she'll not leave him then, but like a tyrant
She'll persecute the poor wit-beaten man,
And so bebang him with dry bobs[1] and scoffs,
When he is down, most coward-like, good faith,
As I have pitied the poor patient.
There came a farmer's son a-wooing to her,
A proper man: well-landed too he was,
A man that for his wit need not to ask
What time a year 'twere good to sow his oats,
Nor yet his barley; no, nor when to reap,
To plough his fallows, or to fell his trees,
Well-experienced thus each kind of way;
After a two months' labour at the most—
And yet 'twas well he held it out so long—
He left his love, she had so laced his lips
He could say nothing to her but "God be with ye!"
Why she, when men have dined and call for cheese,
Will straight maintain jests bitter to disgest;[2]
And then some one will fall to argument,
Who if he over-master her with reason,
Then she'll begin to buffet him with mocks.
Well, I do doubt Francis hath so much spleen,
They'll ne'er agree; but I will moderate.
By this time it is time, I think, to enter:
This is the house; shall I knock? no; I will not.
Nor wait, while one comes out to answer me:
I'll in, and let them be as bold with us. [*Exit.*

[1] Taunts. [2] A form of "digest."

SCENE IV.—*A Room in* Master GOURSEY'S *House.*

Enter Master GOURSEY, *reading a letter.*

Mast. Gour. "If that they like, her dowry shall be equal
To your son's wealth or possibility:
It is a means to make our wives good friends,
And to continue friendship 'twixt us two."
'Tis so, indeed: I like this motion,
And it hath my consent, because my wife
Is sore infected and heart-sick with hate;
And I have sought the Galen of advice,
Which only tells me this same potion
To be most sovereign for her sickness' cure.

Enter FRANCIS *and* PHILIP.

Here comes my son, conferring with his friend.—
Francis, how do you like your friend's discourse?
I know he is persuading to this motion.

Fran. Father, as matter that befits a friend,
But yet not me, that am too young to marry.

Mast. Gour. Nay, if thy mind be forward with thy years,
The time is lost thou tarriest. Trust me, boy,
This match is answerable to thy birth;
Her blood and portion give each other grace;
These indented lines promise a sum,
And I do like the value: if it hap
Thy liking to accord to my consent,
It is a match. Wilt thou go see the maid?

Fran. Ne'er trust me, father, the shackles of marriage,
Which I do see in others, seem so severe,
I dare not put my youngling liberty
Under the awe of that instruction;
And yet I grant the limits of free youth
Going astray are often restrained by that.

But Mistress Wedlock, to my scholar-thoughts,
Will be too cursed, I fear: O, should she snip
My pleasure-aiming mind, I shall be sad,
And swear, when I did marry, I was mad!

Mast. Gour. But, boy, let my experience teach thee this—
Yet, in good faith, thou speak'st not much amiss—
When first thy mother's fame to me did come,
Thy grandsire thus then came to me his son,
And even my words to thee to me he said,
And as to me thou say'st to him I said,—
But in a greater huff and hotter blood,
I tell ye, on youth's tip-toes then I stood—
Says he (good faith, this was his very say),
"When I was young, I was but reason's fool,
And went to wedding as to wisdom's school;
It taught me much, and much I did forget,
But, beaten much, by it I got some wit;
Though I was shackled from an often scout,
Yet I would wanton it, when I was out;
'Twas comfort old acquaintance then to meet,
Restrainèd liberty attained is sweet."
Thus said my father to thy father, son,
And thou mayst do this too, as I have done.

Phil. In faith, good counsel, Frank: what say'st thou to it?

Fran. Philip, what should I say?

Phil. Why, either ay or no.

Fran. O, but which rather?

Phil. Why, that which was persuaded by thy father.

Fran. That's ay then. Ay. O, should it fall out ill,
Then I, for I am guilty of that ill!—
I'll not be guilty. No.

Phil. What, backward gone!

Fran. Philip, no whit backward; that is, on.

Phil. On, then.

Fran. O, stay!

Phil. Tush, there is no good luck in this delay.
Come, come; late-comers, man, are shent.[1]
Fran. Heigho, I fear I shall repent!
Well, which way, Philip?
Phil. Why, this way.
Fran. Canst thou tell,
And takest upon thee to be my guide to hell?—
But which way, father?
Mast. Gour. That way.
Fran. Ay, you know,
You found the way to sorrow long ago.
Father, God be wi' ye: you have sent your son
To seek on earth an earthly day of doom,
Where I shall be adjudged, alack the ruth,
To penance for the follies of my youth!
Well, I must go; but, by my troth, my mind
Is not capable to love in that kind.
O, I have looked upon this mould of men,
As I have done upon a lion's den!
Praisèd I have the gallant beast I saw,
Yet wished me no acquaintance with his paw:
And must I now be grated with them? well,
Yet I may hap to prove a Daniel;
And, if I do, sure it would make me laugh,
To be among wild beasts and yet be safe.
Is there a remedy to abate their rage?
Yes, many catch them, and put them in a cage.
Ay, but how catch them? marry, in your hand
Carry me forth a burning firebrand,
For with his sparkling shine, old rumour says,
A firebrand the swiftest runner frays:
This I may do; but, if it prove not so,
Then man goes out to seek his adjunct woe.
Philip, away! and, father, now adieu!
In quest of sorrow I am sent by you.
Mast. Gour. Return, the messenger of joy, my son.

[1] Ruined.

Fran. Seldom in this world such a work is done.
Phil. Nay, nay, make haste, it will be quickly night.
Fran. Why, is it not good to woo by candle-light?
Phil. But, if we make not haste, they'll be abed.
Fran. The better, candles out and curtains spread.
[*Exeunt* FRANCIS *and* PHILIP

Mast. Gour. I know, though that my son's years be not many,
Yet he hath wit to woo as well as any.
Here comes my wife: I am glad my boy is gone,

Enter Mistress GOURSEY.

Ere she came hither. How now, wife? how is't?
What, are ye yet in charity and love
With Mistress Barnes?
Mis. Gour. With Mistress Barnes! why Mistress Barnes, I pray?
Mast. Gour. Because she is your neighbour and—
Mis. Gour. And what?
And a jealous, slandering, spiteful quean she is,
One that would blur my reputation
With her opprobrious malice, if she could;
She wrongs her husband, to abuse my fame:
'Tis known that I have lived in honest name
All my lifetime, and been your right true wife.
Mast. Gour. I entertain no other thought, my wife,
And my opinion's sound of your behaviour.
Mis. Gour. And my behaviour is as sound as it;
But her ill-speeches seeks to rot my credit,
And eat it with the worm of hate and malice.
Mast. Gour. Why, then, preserve it you by patience.
Mis. Gour. By patience! would ye have me shame myself,
And cosen myself to bear her injuries?
Not while her eyes be open will I yield
A word, a letter, a syllable's value,

But equal and make even her wrongs to me
To her again.

Mast. Gour. Then, in good faith, wife, ye are more to blame.

Mis. Gour. Am I to blame, sir? pray, what letter's this? [*Snatches the letter.*

Mast. Gour. There is a dearth of manners in ye, wife,
Rudely to snatch it from me. Give it me.

Mis. Gour. You shall not have it, sir, till I have read it.

Mast. Gour. Give me it, then, and I will read it to you.

Mis. Gour. No, no, it shall not need: I am a scholar
Good enough to read a letter, sir.

Mast. Gour. God's passion, if she know but the contents,
She'll seek to cross this match! she shall not read it.
[*Aside.*
Wife, give it me; come, come, give it me.

Mis. Gour. Husband, in very deed, you shall not have it.

Mast. Gour. What, will you move me to impatience, then?

Mis. Gour. Tut, tell me not of your impatience;
But since you talk, sir, of impatience,
You shall not have the letter, by this light,
Till I have read it; soul, I'll burn it first!

Mast. Gour. Go to, ye move me, wife; give me the letter;
In troth, I shall grow angry, if you do not.

Mis. Gour. Grow to the house-top with your anger, sir!
Ne'er tell me, I care not thus much for it.

Mast. Gour. Well, I can bear enough, but not too much.
Come, give it me; 'twere best you be persuaded;
By God—ye make me swear—now God forgive me!—
Give me, I say, and stand not long upon it;
Go to, I am angry at the heart, my very heart.

Mis. Gour. Heart me no hearts! you shall not have it, sir,

No, you shall not; ne'er look so big,
I will not be afraid at your great looks;
You shall not have it, no, you shall not have it.
Mast. Gour. Shall I not have it? in troth, I'll try that:
Minion, I'll ha' 't; shall I not ha' 't?—I am loth—
Go to, take pausement, be advised—
In faith, I will; and stand not long upon it—
A woman of your years! I am ashamed
A couple of so long continuance
Should thus—God's foot—I cry God heart'ly mercy!—
Go to, ye vex me; and I'll vex ye for it;
Before I leave ye, I will make ye glad
To tender it on your knees; hear ye, I will, I will.
What, worse and worse stomach! true faith,
Shall I be crossed by you in my old age?
And where I should have greatest comfort, too,
A nurse of you?—nurse in the devil's name!—
Go to, mistress; by God's precious deer,
If ye delay—
Mis. Gour. Lord, Lord, why, in what a fit
Are you in, husband! so enraged, so moved,
And for so slight a cause, to read a letter!
Did this letter, love, contain my death,
Should you deny my sight of it, I would not
Nor see my sorrow nor eschew my danger,
But willingly yield me a patient
Unto the doom that your displeasure gave.
Here is the letter; not for that your incensement
[*Gives back the letter.*
Makes me make offer of it, but your health,
Which anger, I do fear, hath crazed,
And viper-like hath sucked away the blood
That wont was to be cheerful in this cheek:
How pale ye look!
Mast. Gour. Pale! Can ye blame me for it? I tell you true,

An easy matter could not thus have moved me.
Well, this resignment—and so forth—but, woman,
This fortnight shall I not forget ye for it.—
Ha, ha, I see that roughness can do somewhat!
I did not think, good faith, I could have set
So sour a face upon it, and to her,
My bed-embracer, my right bosom friend.
I would not that she should have seen the letter—
As poor a man as I am—by my troth,
For twenty pound: well, I am glad I have it. [*Aside.*
Ha, here's ado about a thing of nothing!
What, stomach, ha! 'tis happy you're come down. [*Exit.*

Mis. Gour. Well, crafty fox, I'll hunt ye, by my troth,
Deal ye so closely! Well, I see his drift:
He would not let me see the letter, lest
That I should cross the match; and I will cross it.
Dick Coomes!

Enter COOMES.

Coomes. Forsooth.

Mis. Gour. Come hither, Dick; thou art a man I love,
And one whom I have much in my regard.

Coomes. I thank ye for it, mistress, I thank ye for it.

Mis. Gour. Nay, here's my hand, I will do very much
For thee, if e'er thou stand'st in need of me;
Thou shalt not lack, whilst thou hast a day to live,
Money, apparel—

Coomes. And sword and bucklers?

Mis. Gour. And sword and bucklers too, my gallant Dick,
So thou wilt use but this in my defence.
[*Pointing to his sword.*

Coomes. This! no, faith, I have no mind to this; break my head, if this break not, if we come to any tough play. Nay, mistress, I had a sword, ay, the flower of Smithfield for a sword, a right fox,[1] i' faith; with that, an a man had come over with a smooth and a sharp stroke,

[1] A familiar term for the old English broadsword.

it would have cried twang, and then, when I had doubled my point, traced my ground, and had carried my buckler before me like a garden-butt, and then come in with a cross blow, and over the pick [1] of his buckler two ells long, it would have cried twang, twang, metal, metal: but a dog hath his day; 'tis gone, and there are few good ones made now. I see by this dearth of good swords, that dearth of sword-and-buckler fight begins to grow out: I am sorry for it; I shall never see good manhood again, if it be once gone; this poking fight of rapier and dagger will come up then; then a man, a tall [2] man, and a good sword-and-buckler man, will be spitted like a cat or a coney; then a boy will be as good as a man, unless the Lord show mercy unto us; well, I had as lief be hanged as live to see that day. Well, mistress, what shall I do? what shall I do?

Mis. Gour. Why, this, brave Dick. Thou knowest that Barnes's wife
And I am foes: now, man [3] me to her house;
And though it be dark, Dick, yet we'll have no light,
Lest that thy master should prevent our journey
By seeing our depart. Then, when we come,
And if that she and I do fall to words,
Set in thy foot and quarrel with her men,
Draw, fight, strike, hurt, but do not kill the slaves,
And make as though thou struckest at a man,
And hit her, an thou canst,—a plague upon her!—
She hath misused me, Dick: wilt thou do this?

Coomes. Yes, mistress, I will strike her men; but God forbid that e'er Dick Coomes should be seen to strike a woman!

Mis. Gour. Why, she is mankind; [4] therefore thou mayest strike her.

Coomes. Mankind! nay, an she have any part of a man, I'll strike her, I warrant.

[1] The sharp point in the centre of the buckler.
[2] *i.e.* Brave. [3] Attend. [4] *i.e.* Manlike, masculine.

Mis. Gour. That's my good Dick, that's my sweet Dick!

Coomes. 'Swouns, who would not be a man of valour to have such words of a gentlewoman! one of their words are more to me than twenty of these russet-coats, cheese-cakes, and butter-makers. Well, I thank God, I am none of these cowards; well, an a man have any virtue in him, I see he shall be regarded. [*Aside.*

Mis. Gour. Art thou resolved, Dick? wilt thou do this for me?

And if thou wilt, here is an earnest-penny
Of that rich guerdon I do mean to give thee.

[*Gives money.*

Coomes. An angel,[1] mistress! let me see. Stand you on my left hand, and let the angel lie on my buckler on my right hand, for fear of losing. Now, here stand I to be tempted. They say, every man hath two spirits attending on him, either good or bad; now, I say, a man hath no other spirits but either his wealth or his wife: now, which is the better of them? Why, that is as they are used; for use neither of them well, and they are both nought. But this is a miracle to me, that gold that is heavy hath the upper, and a woman that is light doth soonest fall, considering that light things aspire, and heavy things soonest go down: but leave these considerations to Sir John;[2] they become a black-coat better than a blue. Well, mistress, I had no mind to-day to quarrel; but a woman is made to be a man's seducer; you say, quarrel?

Mis. Gour. Ay.

Coomes. There speaks an angel: is it good?

Mis. Gour. Ay.

Coomes. Then, I cannot do amiss; the good angel goes with me. [*Exeunt.*

[1] The value of the angel was from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 10*s.*

[2] *i.e.* The parson: the title "Sir" was applied to clergymen.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.—*In the Forest.*

Enter Sir RALPH SMITH, Lady SMITH, WILL, *and* Attendants.

SIR RALPH. Come on, my hearts: i' faith, it is ill luck
To hunt all day, and not kill anything.
What sayest thou, lady? art thou weary yet?

L. Smith. I must not say so, sir.

Sir Ralph. Although thou art!

Will. And can you blame her, to be forth so long,
And see no better sport?

Sir Ralph. Good faith, 'twas very hard.

L. Smith. No, 'twas not ill,
Because, you know, it is not good to kill.

Sir Ralph. Yes, venison, lady.

L. Smith. No, indeed, nor them;
Life is as dear in deer as 'tis in men.

Sir Ralph. But they are killed for sport.

L. Smith. But that's bad play,
When they are made to sport their lives away.

Sir Ralph. 'Tis fine to see them run.

L. Smith. What, out of breath?
They run but ill that run themselves to death.

Sir Ralph. They might make, then, less haste, and keep their wind.

L. Smith. Why, then, they see the hounds brings death behind.

Sir Ralph. Then, 'twere as good for them at first to stay,
As to run long, and run their lives away.

L. Smith. Ay, but the stoutest of you all that's here
Would run from death and nimbly scud for fear.
Now, by my troth, I pity these poor elves.[1]

Sir Ralph. Well, they have made us but bad sport to-day.

L. Smith. Yes, 'twas my sport to see them 'scape away.

Will. I wish that I had been at one buck's fall.

L. Smith. Out, thou wood-tyrant! thou art worst of all.

Will. A wood-man,[2] lady, but no tyrant I.

L. Smith. Yes, tyrant-like thou lov'st to see lives die.

Sir Ralph. Lady, no more: I do not like this luck,
To hunt all day, and yet not kill a buck.
Well, it is late; but yet I swear I will
Stay here all night, but I a buck will kill.

L. Smith. All night! nay, good Sir Ralph Smith, do not so.

Sir Ralph. Content ye, lady. Will, go fetch my bow:
A bevy[3] of fair roes I saw to-day
Down by the groves, and there I'll take my stand,
And shoot at one—God send a lucky hand!

L. Smith. Will ye not, then, Sir Ralph, go home with me?

Sir Ralph. No, but my men shall bear thee company.—

[1] A line appears to be lost here, probably ending with "selves," as the whole dialogue is in rhyme. *Haslitt.*

[2] Forester.

[3] Herd. The fat of the roe and the roe-buck was called bevy-grease.

Sirs, man her home. Will, bid the huntsmen couple,
And bid them well reward their hounds to-night.—
Lady, farewell. Will, haste ye with the bow;
I'll stay for thee here by the grove below.

Will. I will; but 'twill be dark, I shall not see:
How shall I see ye, then?

Sir Ralph. Why, halloo to me, and I will answer thee.

Will. Enough, I will.

Sir Ralph. Farewell. [*Exit.*

L. Smith. How willingly dost thou consent to go
To fetch thy master that same killing bow!

Will. Guilty of death I willing am in this,
Because 'twas our ill-haps to-day to miss:
To hunt, and not to kill, is hunter's sorrow.
Come, lady, we'll have venison ere to-morrow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Outside* Master BARNES'S *House.*

Enter PHILIP *and* FRANCIS.

Phil. Come, Frank, now are we hard by the house:
But how now? Sad?

Fran. No, to study how to woo thy sister.

Phil. How, man? how to woo her! why, no matter how;
I am sure thou wilt not be ashamed to woo.
Thy cheek's not subject to a childish blush,
Thou hast a better warrant by thy wit;
I know thy oratory can unfold
A quick invention, plausible discourse,
And set such painted beauty on thy tongue,
As it shall ravish every maiden sense;
For, Frank, thou art not like the russet youth

I told thee of, that went to woo a wench,
And being full stuffed up with fallow wit
And meadow-matter, asked the pretty maid
How they sold corn last market-day with them,
Saying, "Indeed, 'twas very dear with us."
And, do ye hear, ye had not need be so,
For she will, Francis, throughly try your wit;
Sirrah, she'll bow the metal of your wits,
And, if they crack, she will not hold ye current;
Nay, she will weigh your wit, as men weigh angels,[1]
And, if it lack a grain, she will not change with ye.
I cannot speak it but in passion,
She is a wicked wench to make a jest;
Ah me, how full of flouts and mocks she is!

Fran. Some *aqua-vitæ* reason to recover
This sick discourser! Sound[2] not, prythee, Philip.
Tush, tush, I do not think her as thou sayest:
Perhaps she is opinion's darling, Philip,
Wise in repute, the crow's bird. O my friend,
Some judgments slave themselves to small desert,
And wondernise the birth of common wit,
When their own strangeness do but make that strange,
And their ill errors do but make that good:
And why should men debase to make that good?
Perhaps such admiration wins her wit.

Phil. Well, I am glad to hear this bold prepare
For this encounter. Forward, hardy Frank!
Yonder's the window with the candle in't;
Belike she's putting on her night attire:
I told ye, Frank, 'twas late. Well, I will call her,
Marry, softly, that my mother may not hear.
Mall, sister Mall!

MALL *appears at the window.*

Mall. How now, who's there?

Phil. 'Tis I.

[1] Meaning the coins so named. [2] Swoon

Mall. 'Tis I! Who I? I, quoth the dog, or what? A Christcross row I?[1]

Phil. No, sweet pinkany.[2]

Mall. O, is't you, wild-oats?

Phil. Ay, forsooth, wanton.

Mall. Well said, scapethrift.

Fran. Philip, be these your usual best salutes? [*Aside.*

Phil. Is this the harmless chiding of that dove? [*Aside.*

Fran. Dove! One of those that draw the queen of love? [*Aside.*

Mall. How now? who's that, brother? who's that with ye?

Phil. A gentleman, my friend.

Mall. By'r lady, he hath a pure wit.

Fran. How means your holy judgment?

Mall. O, well put-in, sir!

Fran. Up, you would say.

Mall. Well climbed, gentleman!
I pray, sir, tell me, do you cart the queen of love?

Fran. Not cart her, but couch her in your eye,
And a fit place for gentle love to lie.

Mall. Ay, but methinks you speak without the book,
To place a four-wheel waggon in my look:
Where will you have room to have the coachman sit?

Fran. Nay, that were but small manners, and not fit:
His duty is before you bare to stand,
Having a lusty whipstock in his hand.

Mall. The place is void; will you provide me one?

Fran. And if you please, I will supply the room.

Mall. But are ye cunning in the carman's lash?
And can ye whistle well?

[1] *i.e.* An "I" of the Christ-cross row or alphabet.

[2] A term of endearment, supposed to have been originally applied to half-shut, peeping eyes.

Fran. Yes, I can well direct the coach of love.
Mall. Ah, cruel carter! would you whip a dove?
Phil. Hark ye, sister—
Mall. Nay, but hark ye, brother;
Whose white boy[1] is that same? know ye his mother?
Phil. He is a gentleman of a good house.
Mall. Why, is his house of gold?
Is it not made of lime and stone like this?
Phil. I mean he's well-descended.
Mall. God be thanked!
Did he descend some steeple or some ladder?
Phil. Well, you will still be cross; I tell ye, sister—
This gentleman, by all your friends' consent
Must be your husband.
Mall. Nay, not all, some sing another note;
My mother will say no, I hold a groat.
But I thought 'twas somewhat, he would be a carter;
He hath been whipping lately some blind bear,
And now he would ferk[2] the blind b[illegible] m[illegible]e with us.
Phil. Well, do you hear, you, o small distress that would have— on wit,
You that do long for somewhat, I k[illegible] mak[illegible]hat—
My father told me—go to, I'll tell all,
If ye be cross—do you hear me? I have laboured
A year's work in this afternoon for ye:
Come from your cloister, votary, chaste nun,
Come down and kiss Frank Goursey's mother's son.
Mall. Kiss him, I pray?
Phil. Go to, stale maidenhead[3]! come down, I say,
You seventeen and upward, come, come down;
You'll stay till twenty else for your wedding gown.
Mall. Nun, votary, stale maidenhead, seventeen and upward!
Here be names! what, nothing else?
Fran. Yes, or a fair-built steeple without bells.
Mall. Steeple! good people, nay, another cast.

[1] A term of endearment. [2] Urge on. [3] Old maid.

Fran. Ay, or a well-made ship without a mast.
Mall. Fie, not so big, sir, by one part of four.
Fran. Why, then, ye are a boat without an oar.
Mall. O well rowed wit! but what's your fare, I pray?
Fran. Your fair self must be my fairest pay.
Mall. Nay, an you be so dear, I'll choose another.
Fran. Why, take your first man, wench, and go no further. [*Aside.*
Phil. Peace, Francis. Hark ye, sister, this I say:
You know my mind; or answer ay or nay.
Your wit and judgment hath resolved[1] his mind,
And he foresees what after he shall find:
If such discretion, then, shall govern you,
Vow love to him, he'll do the like to you.
Mall. Vow love! who would not love such a comely feature,
Nor high nor low, but of the middle stature?
A middle man, that's the best size indeed;
I like him well: love grant us well to speed!
Fran. And let me see a woman of that tallness,
So slender and of such a middle smallness,
So old enough, and in each part so fit,
So fair, so kind, endued with so much wit,
Of so much wit as it is held a wonder,
'Twere pity to keep love and her asunder;
Therefore go up, my joy, call down my bliss;
Bid her come seal the bargain with a kiss.
Mall. Frank, Frank, I come through dangers, death, and harms,
To make love's patent with my seal of arms.
Phil. But, sister, softly, lest my mother hear.
Mall. Hush, then; mum, mouse in cheese, cat is near. [*Exit* MALL.
Fran. Now, in good faith, Philip, this makes me smile,
That I have wooed and won in so small while.
Phil. Francis, indeed my sister, I dare say,

[1] Satisfied.

Was not determinèd to say thee nay;
For this same tother thing, called maidenhead,
Hangs by so small a hair or spider's thread,
And worn so too with time, it must needs fall,
And, like a well-lured hawk, she knows her call.

Re-enter MALL.

Mall. Whist, brother, whist! my mother heard me tread,
And asked, "Who's there?" I would not answer her,
She called, "A light!" and up she's gone to seek me:
There when she finds me not, she'll hither come;
Therefore dispatch, let it be quickly done.
Francis, my love's lease I do let to thee,
Date of my life and thine: what sayest thou to me?
The ent'ring, fine, or income thou must pay,
Are kisses and embraces every day;
And quarterly I must receive my rent;
You know my mind?

Fran. I guess at thy intent:
Thou shalt not miss a minute of thy time.

Mall. Why, then, sweet Francis, I am only thine.—
Brother, bear witness.

Phil. Do ye deliver this as your deed?

Mall. I do, I do.

Phil. God send ye both good speed!
God's Lord, my mother! Stand aside,
And closely too, lest that you be espied.

Enter Mistress BARNES.

Mis. Bar. Who's there?

Phil. Mother, 'tis I.

Mis. Bar. You disobedient ruffian, careless wretch,
That said your father loved me but too well!
I'll think on't, when thou think'st I have forgot it:
Who's with thee else?—How now, minion? you!

With whom? with him!—Why, what make you here, sir, [*Discovers* FRANCIS *and* MALL.
And thus late too? what, hath your mother sent ye
To cut my throat, that here you be in wait?—
Come from him, mistress, and let go his hand.—
Will ye not, sir?

Fran. Stay, Mistress Barnes, or mother—what ye will; She is my wife, and here she shall be still.

Mis. Bar. How, sir? your wife! wouldst thou my daughter have?
I'll rather have her married to her grave.[1]
Go to; be gone, and quickly, or I swear
I'll have my men beat ye for staying here.

Phil. Beat him, mother! as I am true man,
They were better beat the devil and his dam.

Mis. Bar. What, wilt thou take his part?

Phil. To do him good,
An 'twere to wade hitherto up in blood.

Fran. God-a-mercy, Philip!—But, mother, hear me.

Mis. Bar. Call'st thou me mother? no, thy mother's name
Carries about with it reproach and shame.
Give me my daughter: ere that she shall wed
A strumpet's son, and have her so misled,
I'll marry her to a carter; come, I say,
Give me her from thee.

Fran. Mother, not to-day,
Nor yet to-morrow, till my life's last morrow
Make me leave that which I with leave did borrow:
Here I have borrowed love, I'll not denay[2] it.—
Thy wedding night's my day, then I'll repay it.—
Till then she'll trust me. Wench, is't not so?
And if it be, say "ay," if not, say "no."

[1] A recollection perhaps of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, act ii. sc. 5—
"I would the fool were married to her grave!

[2] *i.e.* Deny.

Mall. Mother, good mother, hear me! O good God,
Now we are even, what, would you make us odd?
Now, I beseech ye, for the love of Christ,
To give me leave once to do what I list.
I am as you were, when you were a maid;
Guess by yourself how long you would have stayed,
Might you have had your will: as good begin
At first as last, it saves us from much sin;
Lying alone, we muse on things and things,
And in our minds one thought another brings:
This maid's life, mother, is an idle life,
Therefore I'll be, ay, I will be a wife;
And, mother, do not mistrust my age or power,
I am sufficient, I lack ne'er an hour;
I had both wit to grant, when he did woo me,
And strength to bear whate'er he can do to me.

Mis. Bar. Well, bold-face, but I mean to make ye stay.
Go to, come from him, or I'll make ye come:
Will ye not come?

Phil. Mother, I pray, forbear;
This match is for my sister.

Mis. Bar. Villain, 'tis not;
Nor she shall not be so matched now.

Phil. In troth, she shall, and your unruly hate
Shall not rule us! we'll end all this debate
By this begun device.

Mis. Bar. Ay, end what you begun! Villains, thieves,
Give me my daughter! will ye rob me of her?—
Help, help! they'll rob me here, they'll rob me here!

Enter Master BARNES, NICHOLAS *and* Boy.

Mast. Bar. How now? what outcry's here? why, how now, woman?

Mis. Bar. Why, Goursey's son, confederate with this boy,
This wretch unnatural and undutiful,
Seeks hence to steal my daughter: will you suffer it?

Shall he, that's son to my arch-enemy,
Enjoy her? Have I brought her up to this?
O God, he shall not have her, no, he shall not!

Mast. Bar. I am sorry she knows it. [*Aside.*]—Hark ye, wife,
Let reason moderate your rage a little.
If you examine but his birth and living,
His wit and good behaviour, you will say,
Though that ill-hate make your opinion bad,
He doth deserve as good a wife as she.

Mis. Bar. Why, will you give consent he shall enjoy her?

Mast. Bar. Ay, so that thy mind would agree with mine.

Mis. Bar. My mind shall ne'er agree to this agreement.

Enter Mistress GOURSEY *and* COOMES.

Mast. Bar. And yet it shall go forward:—but who's here?
What, Mistress Goursey! how knew she of this?

Phil. Frank, thy mother!

Fran. 'Sowns, where? a plague upon it!
I think the devil is set to cross this match.

Mis. Gour. This is the house, Dick Coomes, and yonder's th' light:
Let us go near. How now? methinks I see
My son stand hand in hand with Barnes's daughter.
Why, how now, sirrah? is this time of night
For you to be abroad? what have we here?
I hope that love hath not thus coupled you.

Fran. Love, by my troth, mother, love: she loves me,
And I love her; then we must needs agree.

Mis. Bar. Ay, but I'll keep her sure enough from thee.

Mis Gour. It shall no need, I'll keep him safe enough;
Be sure he shall not graft in such a stock.

Mis. Bar. What stock, forsooth? as good a stock as thine:
I do not mean that he shall graft in mine.
Mis. Gour. Nor shall he, mistress. Hark, boy; th'art but mad
To love the branch that hath a root so bad.
Fran. Then, mother, I will graft a pippin on a crab.
Mis. Gour. It will not prove well.
Fran. But I will prove my skill.
Mis. Bar. Sir, but you shall not.
Fran. Mothers both, I will.
Mast. Bar. Hark, Philip: send away thy sister straight;
Let Francis meet her where thou shalt appoint;
Let them go several[1] to shun suspicion,
And bid them go to Oxford both this night;
There to-morrow say that we will meet them,
And there determine of their marriage. [*Aside.*
Phil. I will: though it be very late and dark,
My sister will endure it for a husband. [*Aside.*
Mast. Bar. Well, then, at Carfax,[2] boy, I mean to meet them. [*Aside.*
Phil. Enough. [*Exit* Master BARNES.
Would they would begin to chide!
For I would have them brawling, that meanwhile
They may steal hence, to meet where I appoint it. [*Aside.*
What, mother, will you let this match go forward?
Or, Mistress Goursey, will you first agree?
Mis. Gour. Shall I agree first?
Phil. Ay, why not? come, come.
Mis. Gour. Come from her, son, and if thou lov'st thy mother.
Mis. Bar. With the like spell, daughter, I conjure thee.
Mis. Gour. Francis, by fair means let me win thee from her,

[1] Separately. [2] A well-known part of Oxford.

And I will gild my blessing, gentle son,
With store of angels. I would not have thee
Check thy good fortune by this cos'ning choice:
O, do not thrall thy happy liberty
In such a bondage! if thou'lt needs be bound,
Be then to better worth; this worthless choice
Is not fit for thee.

Mis. Bar. Is't not fit for him? wherefore is't not fit?
Is he too brave[1] a gentleman, I pray?
No, 'tis not fit; she shall not fit his turn:
If she were wise, she would be fitter for
Three times his better. Minion, go in, or I'll make ye;
I'll keep ye safe from him, I warrant ye.

Mis. Gour. Come, Francis, come from her.

Fran. Mothers, with both hands shove I hate from love,
That like an ill-companion would infect
The infant mind of our affection:
Within this cradle shall this minute's babe
Be laid to rest; and thus I'll hug my joy.

Mis. Gour. Wilt thou be obstinate, thou self-willed boy?
Nay, then, perforce I'll part ye, since ye will not.

Coomes. Do ye hear, mistress? pray ye give me leave to talk two or three cold words with my young master.—Hark ye, sir, ye are my master's son, and so forth; and indeed I bear ye some good-will, partly for his sake, and partly for your own; and I do hope you do the like to me,—I should be sorry else. I must needs say ye are a young man; and for mine own part, I have seen the world, and I know what belongs to causes, and the experience that I have, I thank God I have travelled for it.

Fran. Why, how far have ye travelled for it?

[1] *i.e.* Fine.

Boy. From my master's house to the ale-house.

Coomes. How, sir?

Boy. So, sir.

Coomes. Go to. I pray, correct your boy; 'twas ne'er a good world, since a boy would face a man so.

Fran. Go to. Forward, man.

Coomes. Well, sir, so it is, I would not wish ye to marry without my mistress' consent.

Fran. And why?

Coomes. Nay, there's ne'er a why but there is a wherefore; I have known some have done the like, and they have danced a galliard [1] at beggars'-bush [2] for it.

Boy. At beggars'-bush! Hear him no more, master; he doth bedaub ye with his dirty speech. Do ye hear, sir? how far stands beggars'-bush from your father's house, sir? Why, thou whoreson refuge [3] of a tailor, that wert 'prentice to a tailor half an age, and because, if thou hadst served ten ages thou wouldst prove but a botcher, thou leapst from the shop-board to a blue coat, doth it become thee to use thy terms so? well, thou degree above a hackney, and ten degrees under a page, sew up your lubber lips, or 'tis not your sword and buckler shall keep my poniard from your breast.

Coomes. Do ye hear, sir? this is your boy.

Fran. How then?

Coomes. You must breech him for it.

Fran. Must I? how, if I will not?

Coomes. Why, then, 'tis a fine world, when boys keep boys, and know not how to use them.

Fran. Boy, ye rascal!

Mis. Gour. Strike him, an thou darest.

[1] Described by Sir John Davies in his *Orchestra* as "a gallant dance . . . with lofty turns and capriols in the air."

[2] A common proverbial expression: "Beggars'-bush being a tree notoriously known, on the left-hand of the London road, from Huntingdon to Caxton." Hazlitt's *Proverbs.*

[3] *i.e.* Refuse.

Coomes. Strike me? alas, he were better strike his father! 'Sowns, go to, put up your bodkin.[1]

Fran. Mother, stand by; I'll teach that rascal—

Coomes. Go to, give me good words, or by God's dines,[2] I'll buckle ye for all your bird-spit.

Fran. Will you so, sir?

Phil. Stay, Frank, this pitch of frenzy will defile thee;
Meddle not with it: thy unreprovèd valour
Should be high-minded; couch it not so low.
Dost hear me? take occasion to slip hence,
But secretly, let not thy mother see thee:
At the back-side there is a coney-green;[3]
Stay there for me, and Mall and I will come to thee.
[*Aside.*

Fran. Enough, I will [*Aside.*] Mother, you do me wrong
To be so peremptory in your command,
And see that rascal to abuse me so.

Coomes. Rascal! take that and take all! Do ye hear, sir? I do not mean to pocket up this wrong.

Boy. I know why that is.

Coomes. Why?

Boy. Because you have ne'er a pocket.

Coomes. A whip, sirrah, a whip! But, sir, provide your tools against to-morrow morning; 'tis somewhat dark now, indeed: you know Dawson's close, between the hedge and the pond; 'tis good even ground; I'll meet you there; an I do not, call me cut;[4] an you be a man, show yourself a man; we'll have a bout or two; and so we'll part for that present.

Fran. Well, sir, well.

Nich. Boy, have they appointed to fight?

Boy. Ay, Nicholas; wilt not thou go see the fray?

[1] A common term for a small dagger, but here seemingly used in contempt.

[2] The origin of this corrupted oath is, I believe, unknown. *Dyce*

[3] Rabbit-burrow.

[4] *i.e.* Call me horse. A term of contempt.

Nich. No, indeed; even as they brew, so let them bake. I will not thrust my hand into the flame, an I need not; 'tis not good to have an oar in another man's boat; little said is soon amended, and in little meddling cometh great rest; 'tis good sleeping in a whole skin; so a man might come home by Weeping-Cross;[1] no, by lady, a friend is not so soon gotten as lost; blessed are the peace-makers; they that strike with the sword, shall be beaten with the scabbard.

Phil. Well-said, Proverbs: ne'er another to that purpose?

Nich. Yes, I could have said to you, sir, Take heed is a good reed.[2]

Phil. Why to me, take heed?

Nich. For happy is he whom other men's harms do make to beware.

Phil. O, beware, Frank! Slip away, Mall, you know what I told ye. I'll hold our mothers both in talk meanwhile. [*Aside.*] Mother and Mistress Goursey, methinks you should not stand in hatred so hard with one another.

Mis. Bar. Should I not, sir? should I not hate a harlot,
That robs me of my right, vile boy?

Mis. Gour. That title I return unto thy teeth,
[*Exeunt* FRANCIS *and* MALL.
And spit the name of harlot in thy face.

Mis. Bar. Well, 'tis not time of night to hold out chat
With such a scold as thou art; therefore now
Think that I hate thee, as I do the devil.

Mis. Gour. The devil take thee, if thou dost not, wretch!

Mis. Bar. Out upon thee, strumpet!

[1] A not uncommon proverbial expression. Nares mentions three places which still retain the name—one between Oxford and Banbury, another close to Stafford, the third near Shrewsbury. *Dyce.*

[2] *i.e.* Counsel.

Mis. Gour. Out upon thee, harlot!
Mis. Bar. Well, I will find a time to be revenged:
Meantime I'll keep my daughter from thy son.—
Where are ye, minion? how now, are ye gone?
Phil. She went in, mother.
Mis. Gour. Francis, where are ye?
Mis. Bar. He is not here. O, then, they slipped away,
And both together!
Phil. I'll assure ye, no:
My sister she went in—into the house.
Mis. Bar. But then she'll out again at the back door,
And meet with him: but I will search about
All these same fields and paths near to my house;
They are not far, I am sure, if I make haste. [*Exit.*
Mis. Gour. O God, how went he hence, I did not see him?
It was when Barnes's wife did scold with me:
A plague on her!—Dick, why didst not thou look to him?
Coomes. What should I look for him? no, no,
I look not for him while[1] to-morrow morning.
Mis. Gour. Come, go with me to help me look him out.
Alas! I have nor light, nor link, nor torch!
Though it be dark, I will take any pains
To cross this match. I prithee, Dick, away.
Coomes. Mistress, because I brought ye out, I'll bring ye home; but, if I should follow, so he might have the law on his side.
Mis. Gour. Come, 'tis no matter; prythee, go with me. [*Exeunt* Mis. GOURSEY *and* COOMES.
Mast. Bar. Philip, thy mother's gone to seek thy sister,
And in a rage, i'faith: but who comes here?

[1] *i.e.* Till.

Phil. Old Master Goursey, as I think, 'tis he.
Mast. Bar. 'Tis so, indeed.

Enter Master GOURSEY *and* HODGE.

Mast. Gour. Who's there?
Mast. Bar. A friend of yours.
Mast. Gour. What, Master Barnes! did ye not see my wife?
Mast. Bar. Yes, sir, I saw her; she was here even now.
Mast. Gour. I doubted that; that made me come unto you:
But whither is she gone?
Phil. To seek your son, who slipped away from her
To meet with Mall my sister in a place,
Where I appointed; and my mother too
Seeks for my sister; so they both are gone:
My mother hath a torch; marry, your wife
Goes darkling up and down, and Coomes before her.
Mast. Gour. I thought that knave was with her; but 'tis well:
I pray God, they may come by ne'er a light,
But both be led a dark dance in the night!
Hod. Why, is my fellow, Dick, in the dark with my mistress? I pray God, they be honest, for there may be much knavery in the dark: faith, if I were there, I would have some knavery with them. [*Aside.*] Good master, will ye carry the torch yourself, and give me leave to play at blindman-buff with my mistress.
Phil. On that condition thou wilt do thy best
To keep thy mistress and thy fellow, Dick,
Both from my sister and thy master's son,
I will entreat thy master let thee go.
Hod. O, ay, I warrant ye, I'll have fine tricks to cosen them.
Mast. Gour. Well, sir, then, go your ways; I give you leave.

Hod. O brave! but whereabout are they?
Phil. About our coney-green they surely are,
If thou canst find them.
Hod. O let me alone to grope for cunnies. [*Exit.*
Phil. Well, now will I to Frank and to my sister.
Stand you two hearkening near the coney-green;
But sure your light in you must not be seen;
Or else let Nicholas stand afar off with it,
And as his life keep it from Mistress Goursey.
Shall this be done?
Mast. Bar. Philip, it shall.
Phil. God be with ye! I'll be gone. [*Exit.*
Mast. Bar. Come on, Master Goursey: this same is a means
To make our wives friends, if they resist not.
Mast. Gour. Tut, sir, howsoever, it shall go forward.
Mast. Bar. Come, then, let's do as Philip hath advised.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.—*In the Warren.*

Enter MALL.

MALL. Here is the place where Philip bade me stay,
Till Francis came; but wherefore did my brother
Appoint it here? why in the coney-burrow?
He had some meaning in't, I warrant ye.
Well, here I'll set me down under this tree,
And think upon the matter all alone.
Good Lord, what pretty things these conies are!
How finely they do feed till they be fat,
And then what a sweet meat a coney is!
And what smooth skins they have, both black and gray!
They say they run more in the night than day:
What is the reason? mark; why in the light
They see more passengers than in the night;
For harmful men many a hay[1] do set,
And laugh to see them tumble in the net;
And they put ferrets in the holes—fie, fie!—
And they go up and down where conies lie;
And they lie still, they have so little wit:

[1] A net for catching rabbits—usually stretched before their holes. *Dyce.*

I marvel the warrener will suffer it;
Nay, nay, they are so bad, that they themselves
Do give consent to catch these pretty elves.
How if the warrener should spy me here?
He would take me for a coney, I dare swear.
But when that Francis comes, what will he say?
"Look, boy, there lies a coney in my way!"
But, soft, a light! who's that? soul, my mother!
Nay, then, all-hid:[1] i'faith, she shall not see me;
I'll play bo-peep with her behind this tree.

Enter Mistress BARNES.

Mis. Bar. I marvel where this wench doth hide herself
So closely; I have searched in many a bush.
Mall. Belike my mother took me for a thrush. [*Aside.*
Mis. Bar. She's hid in this same warren, I'll lay money.
Mall. Close as a rabbit-sucker[2] from an old coney. [*Aside.*
Mis. Bar. O God, I would to God that I could find her!
I would keep her from her love's toys yet.
Mall. Ay, so you might, if your daughter had no wit. [*Aside.*
Mis. Bar. What a vile girl 'tis, that would hav't so young!
Mall. A murrain take that dissembling tongue!
Ere your calf's teeth[3] were out, you thought it long. [*Aside.*
Mis. Bar. But, minion, yet I'll keep you from the man.
Mall. To save a lie, mother, say, if you can. [*Aside.*
Mis. Bar. Well, now to look for her.

[1] The game of hide and seek. [2] A sucking, or young rabbit. [3] First teeth.

Mall. Ay, there's the spite:
What trick shall I now have to 'scape her light? [*Aside.*
Mis. Bar. Who's there? what, minion, is it you?—
Beshrew her heart, what a fright she put me to!
But I am glad I found her, though I was afraid. [*Aside.*
Come on your ways; you are a handsome maid!
Why steal you forth a-doors so late at night?
Why, whither go ye? come, stand still, I say.
Mall. No, indeed, mother! this is my best way.
Mis. Bar. 'Tis not the best way; stand by me, I tell ye.
Mall. No; you would catch me, mother. O, I smell ye!
Mis. Bar. Will ye not stand still?
Mall. No, by lady, no.
Mis. Bar. But I will make ye,
Mall. Nay, then, trip-and-go.
Mis. Bar. Mistress, I'll make ye weary, ere I have done.
Mall. Faith, mother, then, I'll try how you can run.
Mis. Bar. Will ye?
Mall. Yes, faith. [*Exeunt.*

Enter FRANCIS *and* Boy.

Fran. Mall, sweet-heart, Mall! what, not a word?
Boy. A little farther, master; call again.
Fran. Why, Mall! I prythee, speak; why, Mall, I say!
I know thou art not far, if thou wilt speak;
Why, Mall!—
But now I see she's in her merry vein,
To make me call, and put me to more pain.
Well, I must bear with her; she'll bear with me:
But I will call, lest that it be not so.—
What, Mall! what, Mall, I say! Boy, we are right?
Have we not missed the way this same dark night?
Boy. Mass, it may be so: as I am true man,
I have not seen a coney since I came;

Yet at the coney-burrow we should meet.
But, hark! I hear the trampling of some feet.

Fran. It may be so, then; therefore, let's lie close.

Enter Mistress GOURSEY *and* COOMES.

Mis. Gour. Where art thou, Dick?

Coomes. Where am I, quoth-a! marry, I may be where anybody will say I am! either in France or at Rome, or at Jerusalem, they may say I am, for I am not able to disprove them, because I cannot tell where I am.

Mis. Gour. O, what a blindfold walk have we had, Dick,
To seek my son! and yet I cannot find him.

Coomes. Why, then, mistress, let's go home.

Mis. Gour. Why, 'tis so dark we shall not find the way.

Fran. I pray God, ye may not, mother, till it be day! [*Aside.*

Coomes. 'Sblood, take heed, mistress, here's a tree.

Mis. Gour. Lead thou the way, and let me hold by thee.

Boy. Dick Coomes, what difference is there between a blind man and he that cannot see?

Fran. Peace, a pox on thee!

Coomes. Swounds, somebody spake.

Mis. Gour. Dick, look about;
It may be here we may find them out.

Coomes. I see the glimpse of somebody here.—
An ye be a sprite, I'll fray the bugbear.—
There a-goes, mistress.

Mis. Gour. O, sir, have I spied you?

Fran. A plague on the boy! t'was he that descried me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PHILIP.

Phil. How like a beauteous lady masked in black
Looks that same large circumference of Heaven!

The sky, that was so fair three hours ago,
Is in three hours become an Ethiop;
And being angry at her beauteous change,
She will not have one of those pearlèd stars
To blab her sable metamorphosis:
'Tis very dark. I did appoint my sister
To meet me at the coney-burrow below,
And Francis too; but neither can I see.
Belike my mother happened on that place,
And frayed them from it, and they both are now
Wand'ring about the fields: how shall I find them?
It is so dark, I scarce can see my hand:
Why, then, I'll halloo for them—no, not so;
So will his voice betray him to our mothers,
And if he answer, bring them where he is.
What shall I then do? it must not be so—
'Sblood, it must be so; how else, I pray?
Shall I stand gaping here all night till day,
And then be ne'er the near?[1] So ho, so ho!

Enter WILL.

Will. So ho! I come: where are ye? where art thou? here!

Phil. How now, Frank, where hast thou been?

Will. Frank! what Frank? sblood, is Sir Ralph mad? [*Aside.*] Here's the bow.

Phil. I have not been much private with that voice:
Methinks Frank Goursey's talk and his doth tell me
I am mistaken; especially by his bow;
Frank had no bow. Well I will leave this fellow,
And halloo somewhat farther in the fields. [*Aside.*—
Dost thou hear, fellow? I perceive by thee
That we are both mistaken: I took thee
For one thou art not; likewise thou took'st me
For Sir Ralph Smith, but sure I am not he:

[1] *i.e.* Nearer.

And so, farewell; I must go seek my friend.
So ho! [*Exit.*

Will. So ho, so ho! nay, then, Sir Ralph, so whore!
For a whore she was sure, if you had her here
So late. Now, you are Sir Ralph Smith, I know!
Well do ye counterfeit and change your voice,
But yet I know ye. But what should be that Francis?
Belike that Francis cosened him of his wench,
And he conceals himself to find her out;
'Tis so, upon my life. Well, I will go,
And help him ring his peal of—so ho, so ho! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Warren.*

Enter FRANCIS.

Fran. A plague on Coomes! a plague upon the boy!
A plague, too—not on my mother for an hundred pound!
Twas time to run; and yet I had not thought
My mother could have followed me so close;
Her legs with age I thought had founderèd;
She made me quite run through a quickset hedge,
Or she had taken me. Well, I may say,
I have run through the briars for a wench;
And yet I have her not—the worse luck mine.
Methought I heard one halloo hereabout;
I judge it Philip; O, the slave will laugh,
Whenas he hears how that my mother scared me!
Well, here I'll stand until I hear him halloo,
And then I'll answer him; he is not far.

Enter Sir RALPH SMITH.

Sir Ralph. My man is hallooing for me up and down,
And yet I cannot meet with him. So ho!

Fran. So ho!
Sir Ralph. Why, what a pox, wert thou so near me, man,
And would'st not speak?
Fran. 'Sblood, ye're very hot.
Sir Ralph. No, sir, I am cold enough with staying here
For such a knave as you.
Fran. Knave! how now, Philip?
Art mad, art mad?
Sir Ralph. Why, art thou not my man,
That went to fetch my bow?
Fran. Indeed, a bow
Might shoot me ten bows down the weather so:
I your man!
Sir Ralph. What art thou, then?
Fran. A man: but what's thy name?
Sir Ralph. Some call me Ralph.
Fran. Then, honest Ralph, farewell.
Sir Ralph. Well said, familiar Will! Plain Ralph, i'faith.
[PHILIP *and* WILL *shout within.*
Fran. There calls my man.
Sir Ralph. But there goes mine away;
And yet I'll hear what this next call will say,
And here I'll tarry, till he call again. [*Retires.*

Enter WILL.

Will. So ho!
Fran. So ho! where art thou, Philip?
Will. 'Sblood, Philip!
But now he called me Francis: this is fine. [*Aside.*
Fran. Why studiest thou? I prythee, tell me, Philip,
Where the wench is.
Will. Even now he asked me (Francis) for the wench,
And now he asks me (Philip) for the wench. [*Aside.*
Well, Sir Ralph, I must needs tell ye now,

It is not for your credit to be forth
So late a-wenching in this order.

Fran. What's this? so late a-wenching doth he say?
[*Aside.*

Indeed 'tis true I am thus late a-wenching,
But I am forced to wench without a wench.

Will. Why, then, you might have ta'en your bow at first,
And gone and killed a buck, and not have been
So long a-drabbing, and be ne'er the near.[1]

Fran. Swounds, what a puzzle am I in this night!
But yet I'll put this fellow farther question. [*Aside.*
Dost thou hear, man? I am not Sir Ralph Smith,
As thou dost think I am; but I did meet him,
Even as thou sayest, in pursuit of a wench.
I met the wench too, and she asked for thee,
Saying 'twas thou that wert her love, her dear,
And that Sir Ralph was not an honest knight
To train her thither, and to use her so.

Will. 'Sblood, my wench! swounds, were he ten Sir Ralphs—

Fran. Nay, 'tis true, look to it; and so, farewell. [*Exit.*

Will. Indeed, I do love Nan our dairymaid:
And hath he trained her forth to that intent,
Or for another? I carry his crossbow,
And he doth cross me, shooting in my bow.
What shall I do? [*Exit.*

Enter PHILIP.

Phil. So ho!

Sir Ralph [*Advancing*]. So ho!

Phil. Francis, art thou there?

Sir Ralph. No, here's no Francis. Art thou Will, my man?

Phil. Will Fool your man, Will Goose your man!
My back, sir, scorns to wear your livery.

[1] *i.e.* Nearer.

Sir Ralph. Nay, sir, I moved but such a question to you,
And it hath not disparaged you, I hope;
'Twas but mistaking; such a night as this
May well deceive a man. God be w'ye, sir. [*Exit.*

Phil. God's will, 'tis Sir Ralph Smith, a virtuous knight!
How gently entertains he my hard answer!
Rude anger made my tongue unmannerly:
I cry him mercy. Well, but all this while
I cannot find a Francis.—Francis, ho!

Re-enter WILL.

Will. Francis, ho! O, you call Francis now!
How have ye used my Nan? come, tell me, how.

Phil. Thy Nan! what Nan?

Will. Ay, what Nan, now! say, do you not seek a wench?

Phil. Yes, I do.

Will. Then, sir, that is she.

Phil. Art not thou he I met withal before?

Will. Yes, sir; and you did counterfeit before,
And said to me you were not Sir Ralph Smith.

Phil. No more I am not. I met Sir Ralph Smith;
Even now he asked me, if I saw his man.

Will. O, fine!

Phil. Why, sirrah, thou art much deceived in me:
Good faith, I am not he thou think'st I am.

Will. What are ye, then?

Phil. Why, one that seeks one Francis and a wench.

Will. And Francis seeks one Philip and a wench.

Phil. How canst thou tell?

Will. I met him seeking Philip and a wench.
As I was seeking Sir Ralph and a wench.

Phil. Why, then, I know the matter: we met cross,
And so we missed; now here we find our loss.

Well, if thou wilt, we two will keep together,
And so we shall meet right with one or other.

Will. I am content: but, do you hear me, sir?
Did not Sir Ralph Smith ask ye for a wench?

Phil. No, I promise thee, nor did he look
For any but thyself, as I could guess.

Will. Why, this is strange: but come, sir, let's away:
I fear that we shall walk here, till't be day. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE III.—*Open Fields.*

Enter Boy.

Boy. O God, I have run so far into the wind, that I have run myself out of wind! They say a man is near his end, when he lacks breath; and I am at the end of my race, for I can run no farther; then here I be in my breath-bed, not in my death-bed. [*Exit.*

Enter COOMES.

Coomes. They say men moil and toil for a poor living; so I moil and toil, and am living, I thank God; in good time be it spoken. It had been better for me my mistress's angel had been light, for then perhaps it had not led me into this darkness. Well, the devil never blesses a man better, when he purses up angels by owl-light. I ran through a hedge to take the boy, but I stuck in the ditch, and lost the boy. [*Falls.*] 'Swounds, a plague on that clod, that molehill, that ditch, or what the devil so e'er it were, for a man cannot see what it was! Well, I would not, for the price of my sword and buckler, anybody should see me in this taking, for it would make me but cut off their legs for laughing at me. Well, down I am, and down I mean to be, because I am weary; but to tumble down thus, it was no part of

my meaning: then, since I am down, here I'll rest me. and no man shall remove me.

Enter HODGE.

Hod. O, I have sport in coney, i'faith! I have almost burst myself with laughing at Mistress Barnes. She was following of her daughter; and I, hearing her, put on my fellow Dick's sword-and-buckler voice and his *swounds* and *sblood* words, and led her such a dance in the dark as it passes.[1] "Here she is," quoth I. "Where?" quoth she. "Here," quoth I. O, it hath been a brave here-and-there night! but, O, what a soft-natured thing the dirt is! how it would endure my hard treading, and kiss my feet for acquaintance! and how courteous and mannerly were the clods to make me stumble only of purpose to entreat me lie down and rest me! But now, an I could find my fellow Dick, I would play the knave with him honestly, i'faith. Well, I will grope in the dark for him, or I'll poke with my staff, like a blind man, to prevent a ditch.

[*He stumbles on* DICK COOMES.

Coomes. Who's that, with a pox?

Hod. Who art thou, with a pestilence?

Coomes. Why, I am Dick Coomes.

Hod. What, have I found thee, Dick? nay, then, I am for ye, Dick. [*Aside.*]—Where are ye, Dick?

Coomes. What can I tell, where I am?

Hod. Can ye not tell? come, come, ye wait on your mistress well! come on your ways; I have sought you till I am weary, and called ye, till I am hoarse: good Lord, what a jaunt I have had this night, heigho!

Coomes. Is't you, mistress, that came over me? 'Sblood, 'twere a good deed to come over you for this night's work. I cannot afford all this pains for an angel: I tell ye true; a kiss were not cast away upon a good fellow, that hath deserved more that way than a

[1] *i.e.* Excels.

kiss, if your kindness would afford it him: what, shall I have't, mistress?

Hod. Fie, fie, I must not kiss my man.

Coomes. Nay, nay, ne'er stand; shall I, shall I? nobody sees: say but I shall, and I'll smack it soundly, i'faith.

Hod. Away, bawdy man! in truth, I'll tell your master.

Coomes. My master! go to, ne'er tell me of my master: he may pray for them that may, he is past it: and for mine own part, I can do somewhat that way, I thank God; I am not now to learn, and 'tis your part to have your whole desire.

Hod. Fie, fie, I am ashamed of you: would you tempt your mistress to lewdness?

Coomes. To lewdness! no, by my troth, there's no such matter in't, it is for kindness; and, by my troth, if you like my gentle offer, you shall have what courteously I can afford ye.

Hod. Shall I indeed, Dick? I'faith, if I thought nobody would see—

Coomes. Tush, fear not that; swoons, they must have cats' eyes, then.

Hod. Then, kiss me, Dick.

Coomes. A kind wench, i'faith! [*Aside.*]—Where are ye, mistress?

Hod. Here, Dick. O, I am in the dark! Dick, go about.

Coomes. Nay, I'll throw[1] sure: where are ye?

Hod. Here.

Coomes. A plague on this post! I would the carpenter had been hanged, that set it up, for me. Where are ye now?

Hod. Here.

Coomes. Here! O, I come. [*Exit.*] A plague on it, I am in a pond, mistress!

[1] The second edit. has "grope."

Hod. Ha, ha! I have led him into a pond.—Where art thou, Dick?

Coomes [*Within*]. Up to the middle in a pond!

Hod. Make a boat of thy buckler, then, and swim out. Are ye so hot, with a pox? would you kiss my mistress? cool ye there, then, good Dick Coomes. O, when he comes forth, the skirts of his blue coat will drop like a pent-house! O, that I could see, and not be seen; how he would spaniel it, and shake himself, when he comes out of the pond! But I'll be gone; for now he'll fight with a fly, if he but buzz in his ear. [*Exit.*

Re-enter COOMES.

Coomes. Here's so-ho-ing with a plague! so hang, an ye will; for I have been almost drowned. A pox of your stones,[1] an ye call this kissing! Ye talk of a drowned rat, but 'twas time to swim like a dog; I had been served like a drowned cat else. I would he had digged his grave that digged the pond! my feet were foul indeed, but a less pail than a pond would have served my turn to wash them. A man shall be served thus always when he follows any of these females: but 'tis my kind heart that makes me thus forward in kindness unto them: well, God amend them, and make them thankful to them that would do them pleasure. I am not drunk, I would ye should well know it; and yet I have druuk more than will do me good, for I might have had a pump set up with as good March beer as this was, and ne'er set up an ale-bush for the matter. Well, I am somewhat in wrath, I must needs say; and yet I am not more angry than wise, nor more wise than angry; but I'll fight with the next man I meet, an it be but for luck's sake; and if he love to see himself hurt, let him bring light with him; I'll do it by darkling else, by God's dines. Well, here will I walk, whosoever says nay.

[1] The second edit. has "lips."

Enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. He that worse may, must hold the candle; but my master is not so wise as God might have made him. He is gone to seek a hare in a hen's nest, a needle in a bottle of hay, which is as seldom seen as a black swan: he is gone to seek my young mistress; and I think she is better lost than found, for whosoever hath her hath but a wet eel by the tail. But they may do as they list; the law is in their own hands; but an they would be ruled by me, they should set her on the lee-land, and bid the devil split her; beshrew her fingers, she hath made me watch past mine hour; but I'll watch her a good turn for it.

Coomes. How, who's that? Nicholas!—So, first come, first served; I am for him [*Aside.*].—How now, Proverb, Proverb? 'sblood, how now, Proverb?

Nich. My name is Nicholas, Richard; and I know your meaning, and I hope ye mean no harm. I thank ye: I am the better for your asking.

Coomes. Where have ye been a-whoring thus late, ha?

Nich. Master Richard, the good wife would not seek her daughter in the oven, unless she had been there herself: but, good Lord, you are knuckle-deep in dirt!—I warrant, when he was in, he swore Walsingham,[1] and chafed terrible for the time [*Aside.*]—Look, the water drops from you as fast as hops.

Coomes. What need'st thou to care, whip-her-jenny,[2] tripe-cheeks? out, you fat ass!

Nich. Good words cost nought: ill words corrupt good manners, Richard; for a hasty man never wants woe. And I had thought you had been my friend; but I see all is not gold that glitters; there's falsehood in fellowship; *amicus certus in re certa cernitur;* time and truth

[1] Perhaps swore by our Lady of Walsingham, in Norfolk. *Dyce.*

[2] The name of a game at cards, though used here as a term of reproach.

tries all ; and 'tis an old proverb, and not so old as true, bought wit is the best ; I can see day at a little hole ; I know your mind as well as though I were within you ; 'tis ill halting before a cripple : go to, you seek to quarrel ; but beware of had I wist; [1] so long goes the pot to the water, at length it comes home broken ; I know you are as good a man as ever drew sword, or as was e'er girt in a girdle, or as e'er went on neat's leather, or as one shall see on a summer's day, or as e'er looked man in the face, or as e'er trod on God's earth, or as e'er broke bread or drunk drink ; but he is proper that hath proper conditions ; [2] but be not you like the cow, that gives a good sop of milk, and casts it down with her heels ; I speak plainly, for plain-dealing is a jewel, and he that useth it shall die a beggar ; well, that happens in an hour that happens not in seven years ; a man is not so soon whole as hurt ; an you should kill a man, you would kiss his—well, I say little, but I think the more. Yet I'll give him good words ; 'tis good to hold the candle before the devil ; yet, by God's dines, I'll take no wrong, if he had a head as big as Brass,[3] or looked as high as Paul's steeple. [*Aside.*

Coomes. Sirrah, thou grasshoper, that shalt skip from my sword as from a scythe ; I'll cut thee out in collops and eggs, in steaks, in sliced beef, and fry thee with the fire I shall strike from the pike of thy buckler.

Nich. Ay, Brag's a good dog ; threatened folks live long.

Coomes. What say ye, sir ?

Nich. Why, I say not so much as, How do ye ?

Coomes. Do ye not so, sir ?

Nich. No, indeed, whatsoe'er I think ; and thought is free.

Coomes. You whoreson wafer-cake, by God's dines, I'll crush ye for this !

[1] *i.e.* Had I known the consequences : a common proverbial expression of repentance.

[2] Disposition.

[3] Probably a proverbial allusion to the famous Brazen head.

Nich. Give an inch, and you'll take an ell; I will not put my finger in a hole, I warrant ye: what, man! ne'er crow so fast, for a blind man may kill a hare; I have known when a plain fellow hath hurt a fencer, so I have: what! a man may be as slow as a snail, but as fierce as a lion, an he be moved; indeed, I am patient, I must needs say, for patience in adversity brings a man to the Three Cranes in the Vintry.

Coomes. Do ye hear? set down your torch; draw, fight, I am for ye.

Nich. And I am for ye too, though it be from this midnight to the next morn.

Coomes. Where be your tools?

Nich. Within a mile of an oak, sir; he's a proud horse will not carry his own provender, I warrant ye.

Coomes. Now am I in my quarrelling humour, and now can I say nothing but, zounds, draw! but I'll untruss, and then have to it. [*Aside.*

Re-enter severally HODGE *and* Boy.

Hod. Who's there? boy! honest boy, well-met: where hast thou been?

Boy. O Hodge, Dick Coomes hath been as good as a cry of hounds, to make a breathed hare of me! but did'st thou see my master?

Hod. I met him even now, and he asked me for thee, and he is gone up and down, whooing like an owl for thee.

Boy. Owl, ye ass!

Hod. Ass! no, nor glass, for then it had been Owl-glass:[1] but who's that, boy?

Boy. By the mass, 'tis our Coomes and Nicholas; and it seems they are providing to fight.

Hod. Then we shall have fine sport, i' faith. Sirrah,

[1] Owlglass, the hero of a popular German jest book ("Eulenspiegel,") which was translated into English at a very early period, was a Saxon buffoon.

let's stand close, and when they have fought a bout or two, we'll run away with the torch, and leave them to fight darkling, shall we?

Boy. Content; I'll get the torch: stand close.

Coomes. So now my back hath room to reach: I do not love to be laced in, when I go to lace a rascal. I pray God, Nicholas prove not a fly:[1] it would do me good to deal with a good man now, that we might have half-a-dozen good smart strokes. Ha, I have seen the day I could have danced in my fight, one, two, three, four, and five, on the head of him; six, seven, eight, nine, and ten on the sides of him; and, if I went so far as fifteen, I warrant I showed him a trick of one-and-twenty; but I have not fought this four days, and I lack a little practice of my ward; but I shall make a shift: ha, close [*Aside*].—Are ye disposed, sir?

Nich. Yes, indeed, I fear no colours: change sides, Richard.

Coomes. Change the gallows! I'll see thee hanged first.

Nich. Well, I see the fool will not leave his bauble for the Tower of London.

Coomes. Fool, ye rogue! nay, then, fall to it.

Nich. Good goose, bite not.

Coomes. 'Sblood, how pursy I am Well, I see exercise is all! I must practise my weapons oftener; I must have a goal or two at foot-ball, before I come to my right kind [*Aside*]. Give me thy hand, Nicholas: thou art a better man than I took thee for, and yet thou art not so good a man as I.

Nich. You dwell by ill-neighbours, Richard; that makes ye praise yourself.

Coomes. Why, I hope thou wilt say I am a man?

Nich. Yes, I'll say so, if I should see ye hanged.

Coomes. Hanged, ye rogue! nay, then, have at ye. [*While they fight, exeunt* HODGE *and* Boy *with the torch.*] Zounds, the light is gone!

[1] First 4to, "Silly."

Nich. O Lord, it is as dark as pitch!

Coomes. Well, here I'll lie with my buckler thus, lest striking up and down at randall[1] the rogue might hurt me, for I cannot see to save it, and I hold my peace, lest my voice should bring him where I am. [*Stands aside.*

Nich. 'Tis good to have a cloak for the rain; a bad shift is better than none at all; I'll sit here, as if I were as dead as a door-nail. [*Stands aside.*

Enter Master BARNES *and* Master GOURSEY.

Mast. Gour. Hark! there's one hallooes.

Mast. Barnes. And there's another.

Mast. Gour. And everywhere we come, I hear some halloo,
And yet it is our haps to meet with none.

Mast. Bar. I marvel where your Hodge is and my man.

Mast. Gour. Ay, and our wives? we cannot meet with them,
Nor with the boy, nor Mall, nor Frank, nor Philip,
Nor yet with Coomes, and yet we ne'er stood still.
Well, I am very angry with my wife,
And she shall find I am not pleased with her,
If we meet ne'er so soon: but 'tis my hope
She hath had as blind a journey on't as we;
Pray God, she have, and worse, if worse may be!

Mast. Bar. This is but short-lived envy,[2] Master Goursey:
But, come, what say ye to my policy?

Mast. Gour. I' faith, 'tis good, and we will practise it;
But, sir, it must be handled cunningly,
Or all is marred; our wives have subtle heads,
And they will soon perceive a drift device.

[1] Random.

[2] *i.e.* Ill-will.

Enter Sir RALPH SMITH.

Sir Ralph. So ho!
Mast. Gour. So ho!
Sir Ralph. Who there?
Mast. Bar. Here's one or two.
Sir Ralph. Is Will there?
Mast. Bar. No, Philip?
Mast. Gour. Frank?
Sir Ralph. No, no.—
Was ever man deluded thus like me?
I think some spirit leads me thus amiss,
As I have often heard that some have been
Thus in the nights.
But yet this mazes me; where'er I come,
Some asks me still for Frank or Philip,
And none of them can tell me where Will is. [*Aside.*
Will. So ho!
Phil. So ho!
Hod. So ho!
Boy. So ho! [*They halloo within.*
Sir Ralph. Zounds, now I hear four halloo at the least!
One had a little voice; then, that's the wench
My man hath lost: well, I will answer all. [*Aside.*
So ho!

Re-enter HODGE.

Hod. Whoop, whoop!
Sir Ralph. Who's there? Will?
Hod. No, sir; honest Hodge: but, I pray ye, sir, did ye not meet with a boy with a torch? he is run away from me, a plague on him!
Sir Ralph. Heyday, from Frank and Philip to a torch,
And to a boy! nay, zounds, then hap as 'twill. [*Aside.*
[*Exeunt* Sir RALPH *and* HODGE *severally.*
Mast. Gour. Who goes there?

Enter WILL.

Will. Guess here.

Mast. Bar. Philip?

Will. Philip! no, faith; my name's Will—ill-Will, for I was never worse: I was even now with him, and might have been still, but that I fell into a ditch and lost him, and now I am going up and down to seek him.

Mast. Gour. What would'st thou do with him?

Will. Why, I would have him go with me to my master's.

Mast. Gour. Who's thy master?

Will. Why, Sir Ralph Smith; and thither he promised me he would come; if he keep his word, so 'tis.

Mast. Bar. What was a doing, when thou first found'st him?

Will. Why, he hallooed for one Francis, and Francis hallooed for him; I hallooed for my master, and my master for me; but we missed still, meeting contrary, Philip and Francis with me and my master, and I and my master with Philip and Frank.

Mast. Gour. Why, wherefore is Sir Ralph so late abroad?

Will. Why, he meant to kill a buck; I'll say so to save his honesty, but my Nan was his mark [*Aside*]. And he sent me for his bow, and when I came, I hallooed for him; but I never saw such luck to miss him; it hath almost made me mad.

Mast. Bar. Well, stay with us; perhaps Sir Ralph and he will come anon: hark! I do hear one halloo.

Enter PHILIP.

Phil. Is this broad waking in a winter's night?
I am broad walking in a winter's night—
Broad indeed, because I am abroad—
But these broad fields, methinks, are not so broad
That they may keep me forth of narrow ditches.

Here's a hard world!
For I can hardly keep myself upright in it:
I am marvellous dutiful—but, so ho!

Will. So ho!

Phil. Who's there?

Will. Here's Will.

Phil. What, Will! how scap'st thou?

Will. What, sir?

Phil. Nay, not hanging, but drowning: wert thou in a pond or a ditch?

Will. A pestilence on it! is't you, Philip? no, faith, I was but dirty a little: but here's one or two asked for ye.

Phil. Who be they, man?

Mast. Bar. Philip, 'tis I and Master Goursey.

Phil. Father, O father, I have heard them say
The days of ignorance are passed and done;
But I am sure the nights of ignorance
Are not yet passed, for this is one of them.
But where's my sister?

Mast. Bar. Why, we cannot tell.

Phil. Where's Francis?

Mast. Gour. Neither saw we him.

Phil. Why, this is fine.
What, neither he nor I, nor she nor you,
Nor I nor she, nor you and I, till now,
Can meet, could meet, or e'er, I think, shall meet!
Call ye this wooing? no, 'tis Christmas sport
Of Hob-man-blind,[1] all blind, all seek to catch,
All miss—but who comes here?

Enter FRANCIS *and* Boy.

Fran. O, have I catched ye, sir? It was your doing
That made me have this pretty dance to-night;
Had not you spoken, my mother had not scared me:
But I will swinge ye for it.

Phil. Keep the king's peace!

[1] Blind-man's-buff.

Fran. How! art thou become a constable?
Why, Philip, where hast thou been all this while?
Phil. Why, where you were not: but, I pray, where's my sister?
Fran. Why, man, I saw her not; but I have sought her,
As I should seek—
Phil. A needle, have ye not?
Why you, man, are the needle that she seeks
To work withal! Well, Francis, do you hear?
You must not answer so, that you have sought her;
But have ye found her? faith, and if you have,
God give ye joy of that ye found with her!
Fran. I saw her not: how could I find her?
Mast. Gour. Why, could ye miss from Master Barnes's house
Unto his coney-burrow?
Fran. Whether I could or no, father, I did.
Phil. Father, I did! Well, Frank, wilt thou believe me?
Thou dost not know how much this same doth grieve me:
Shall it be said thou missed so plain a way,
When as so fair a wench did for thee stay?
Fran. Zounds, man!
Phil. Zounds, man! and if thou hadst been blind,
The coney-burrow thou needest must find.
I tell thee, Francis, had it been my case,
And I had been a wooer in thy place,
I would have laid my head unto the ground,
And scented out my wench's way like a hound;
I would have crept upon my knees all night,
And have made the flintstones links to give me light;
Nay, man, I would.
Fran. Good Lord, what you would do!
Well, we shall see one day how you can woo.
Mast. Gour. Come, come, we see that we have all been crossed;
Therefore, let's go, and seek them we have lost. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.—*In the Fields.*

Enter MALL.



ALL. Am I alone? doth not my mother come?
Her torch I see not, which I well might see,
If any way she were coming toward me:
Why, then, belike she's gone some other way;
And may she go, till I bid her to turn!
Far shall her way be then, and little fair,
For she hath hindered me of my good turn;
God send her wet and weary ere she turn!
I had been at Oxenford, and to-morrow
Have been released from all my maiden's sorrow,
And tasted joy, had not my mother been;
God, I beseech thee, make it her worst sin!
How many maids this night lie in their beds,
And dream that they have lost their maidenheads!
Such dreams, such slumbers I had too enjoyed,
If waking malice had not them destroyed.
A starvèd man with double death doth die,
To have the meat might save him in his eye,
And may not have it: so am I tormented,
To starve for joy I see, yet am prevented.

Well, Frank, although thou wooedst and quickly won,
Yet shall my love to thee be never done;
I'll run through hedge and ditch, through brakes and briars,
To come to thee, sole lord of my desires:
Short wooing is the best, an hour, not years,
For long-debating love is full of fears.
But hark! I hear one tread. O, were't my brother,
Or Frank, or any man, but not my mother!

Enter Sir RALPH SMITH.

Sir Ralph. O, when will this same year of night have end?
Long-looked for days' sun, when wilt thou ascend?
Let not this thieve-friend, misty veil of night,
Encroach on day, and shadow thy fair light,
Whilst thou com'st tardy from thy Thetis' bed,
Blushing forth golden hair and glorious red;
O, stay not long, bright lanthorn of the day,
To light my missed-way feet to my right way!

Mall. It is a man, his big voice tells me so,
Much am I not acquainted with it, though;
And yet mine ear, sound's true distinguisher,
Boys[1] that I have been more familiar
With it than now I am: well, I do judge
It is no envious fellow, out of grudge;
Therefore I'll plead acquaintance, hire his guiding,
And buy of him some place of close abiding,
Till that my mother's malice be expired,
And we may joy in that is long desired. [*Aside.*]—
Who's there?

Sir Ralph. Are ye a maid? No question, this is she
My man doth miss: faith, since she lights on me,
I do not mean till day to let her go;

[1] Probably "buoys."

For whe'er she is my man's love, I will know. [*Aside.*
Hark ye, my maid, if maid, are ye so light,
That you can see to wander in the night?

Mall. Hark ye, true man, if true, I tell ye, no;
I cannot see at all which way I go.

Sir Ralph. Fair maid, is't so? say, had ye ne'er a fall?

Mall. Fair man, not so; no, I had none at all.

Sir Ralph. Could you not stumble on one man, I pray?

Mall. No, no such block till now came in my way.

Sir Ralph. Am I that block, sweet tripe; then, fall and try.

Mall. The ground's too hard a feather-bed; not I!

Sir Ralph. Why, how an you had met with such a stump?

Mall. Why, if he had been your height, I meant to jump.

Sir Ralph. Are ye so nimble?

Mall. Nimble as a doe.

Sir Ralph. Baked in a pie.

Mall. Of ye.

Sir Ralph. Good meat, ye know.

Mall. Ye hunt sometimes?

Sir Ralph. I do.

Mall. What take ye?

Sir Ralph. Deer.

Mall. You'll ne'er strike rascal?[1]

Sir Ralph. Yes, when ye are there.

Mall. Will ye strike me?

Sir Ralph. Yes: will ye strike again?

Mall. No, sir: it fits not maids to fight with men.

Sir Ralph. I wonder, wench, how I thy name might know.

Mall. Why, you may find it, sir, in th' Christcross row.[2]

[1] *i.e.* A deer lean and out of season.

[2] *i.e.* The alphabet.

Sir Ralph. Be my schoolmistress, teach me how to spell it.

Mall. No, faith, I care not greatly, if I tell it;
My name is Mary Barnes.

Sir Ralph. How, wench? Mall Barnes!

Mall. The very same.

Sir Ralph. Why, this is strange.

Mall. I pray, sir, what's your name?

Sir Ralph. Why, Sir Ralph Smith doth wonder, wench, at this;
Why, what's the cause thou art abroad so late?

Mall. What, Sir Ralph Smith! nay, then, I will disclose
All the whole cause to him, in him repose
My hopes, my love: God him, I hope, did send
Our loves and both our mothers' hates to end. [*Aside.*]—
Gentle Sir Ralph, if you my blush might see,
You then would say I am ashamed to be
Found, like a wand'ring stray, by such a knight,
So far from home at such a time of night:
But my excuse is good; love first by fate
Is crossed, controlled, and sundered by fell hate.
Frank Goursey is my love, and he loves me;
But both our mothers hate and disagree;
Our fathers like the match and wish it done;
And so it had, had not our mothers come;
To Oxford we concluded both to go;
Going to meet, they came; we parted so;
My mother followed me, but I ran fast,
Thinking who went from hate had need make haste;
Take me she cannot, though she still pursue:
But now, sweet knight, I do repose on you;
Be you my orator and plead my right,
And get me one good day for this bad night.

Sir Ralph. Alas, good heart, I pity thy hard hap!
And I'll employ all that I may for thee.
Frank Goursey, wench! I do commend thy choice:

Now I remember I met one Francis,
As I did seek my man,—then, that was he,—
And Philip too,—belike that was thy brother:
Why, now I find how I did lose myself,
And wander up and down, mistaking so.
Give me thy hand, Mall: I will never leave,
Till I have made your mothers friends again,
And purchased to ye both your hearts' delight,
And for this same one bad many a good night.
'Twill not be long, ere that Aurora will,
Decked in the glory of a golden sun,
Open the crystal windows of the east,
To make the earth enamoured of her face,
When we shall have clear light to see our way:
Come; night being done, expect a happy day. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mistress BARNES.

Mis. Bar. O, what a race this peevish girl hath led me!
How fast I ran, and now how weary I am!
I am so out of breath I scarce can speak,—
What shall I do?—and cannot overtake her.
'Tis late and dark, and I am far from home:
May there not thieves lie watching hereabout,
Intending mischief unto them they meet?
There may; and I am much afraid of them,
Being alone without all company.
I do repent me of my coming forth;
And yet I do not,—they had else been married,
And that I would not for ten times more labour.
But what a winter of cold fear I thole,[1]
Freezing my heart, lest danger should betide me!
What shall I do to purchase company?
I hear some halloo here about the fields:
Then here I'll set my torch upon this hill,

[1] Suffer, old edits. "stole."

Whose light shall beacon-like conduct them to it;
They that have lost their way, seeing a light,
For it may be seen far off in the night,
Will come to it. Well, here I'll lie unseen,
And look who comes, and choose my company.
Perhaps my daughter may first come to it.

Enter Mistress GOURSEY.

Mis. Gour. Where am I now? nay, where was I even now?
Nor now, nor then, nor where I shall be, know I.
I think I am going home: I may as well
Be going from home; 'tis so very dark,
I cannot see how to direct a step.
I lost my man, pursuing of my son;
My son escaped me too: now, all alone,
I am enforced to wander up and down.
Barnes's wife's abroad: pray God, that she
May have as good a dance, nay, ten times worse;
O, but I fear she hath not; she hath light
To see her way. O, that some bridge would break,
That she might fall into some deep-digged ditch,
And either break her bones or drown herself!
O would these mischiefs I could wish to her
Might light on her!—but, soft; I see a light:
I will go near; it is comfortable,
After this night's sad spirits-dulling darkness.
How now? what, is it set to keep itself?

Mis. Bar. A plague on't, is she there? [*Aside.*

Mis. Gour. O, how it cheers and quickens up my thoughts!

Mis. Bar. O that it were the basilisk's fell eye,
To poison thee! [*Aside.*

Mis. Gour. I care not, if I take it—
Sure none is here to hinder me—
And light me home.

Mis. Bar. I had rather she were hanged
Than I should set it there to do her good. [*Aside.*
Mis. Gour. I' faith, I will.
Mis. Bar. I' faith, you shall not, mistress;
I'll venture a burnt finger but I'll have it. [*Aside.*
Mis. Gour. Yet Barnes's wife would chafe, if that she knew
That I had this good luck to get a light.
Mis. Bar. And so she doth; but praise your luck at parting. [*Aside.*
Mis. Gour. O, that it were her light, good faith, that she
Might darkling walk about as well as I!
Mis. Bar. O, how this mads me, that she hath her wish! [*Aside.*
Mis. Gour. How I would laugh to see her trot about!
Mis. Bar. O, I could cry for anger and for rage! [*Aside.*
Mis. Gour. But who should set it here, I marvel, a God's name.
Mis. Bar. One that will have't from you in the devil's name. [*Aside.*
Mis. Gour. I'll lay my life that it was Barnes's son.
Mis. Bar. No, forsooth, it was Barnes's wife.
Mis. Gour. A plague upon her, how she made me start! [*Aside.*
Mistress, let go the torch.
Mis. Bar. No, but I will not.
Mis. Gour. I'll thrust it in thy face, then.
Mis. Bar. But you shall not.
Mis. Gour. Let go, I say.
Mis. Bar. Let you go, for 'tis mine.
Mis. Gour. But my possession says, it is none of thine.
Mis. Bar. Nay, I have hold too.
Mis. Gour. Well, let go thy hold,
Or I will spurn thee.

Mis. Bar. Do; I can spurn thee too.
Mis. Gour. Canst thou?
Mis. Bar. Ay, that I can.

Enter Master GOURSEY *and* Master BARNES, PHILIP, FRANCIS, COOMES, HODGE, NICHOLAS, *and* WILL.

Mast. Gour. Why, how now, women? how unlike to women
Are ye both now! come, part, come, part, I say.
Mast. Bar. Why, what immodesty is this in you!
Come, part, I say; fie, fie.
Mis. Bar. Fie, fie? I say she shall not have my torch.—
Give me thy torch, boy:—I will run a-tilt,
And burn out both her eyes in my encounter.
Mis. Gour. Give room, and let us have this hot career.
Mast. Gour. I say ye shall not: wife, go to, tame your thoughts,
That are so mad with fury.
Mast. Bar. And, sweet wife,
Temper your rage with patience; do not be
Subject so much to such misgovernment.
Mis. Bar. Shall I not, sir, when such a strumpet wrongs me?
Mast. Gour. How, strumpet, Mistress Barnes! nay, I pray, hark ye:
I oft indeed have heard ye call her so,
And I have thought upon it, why ye should
Twit her with name of strumpet; do you know
Any hurt by her, that you term her so?
Mast. Bar. No, on my life; rage only makes her say so.
Mast. Gour. But I would know whence this same rage should come;
Where's smoke, there's fire; and my heart misgives
My wife's intemperance hath got that name;—
And, Mistress Barnes, I doubt and shrewdly doubt,

And some great cause begets this doubt in me,
Your husband and my wife doth wrong us both.

Mast. Bar. How, think ye so? nay, Master Goursey, then,
You run in debt to my opinion,
Because you pay not such advisèd wisdom,
As I think due unto my good conceit.

Mast. Gour. Then still I fear I shall your debtor prove.

Mast. Bar. Then I arrest you in the name of love;
Not bail, but present answer to my plea;
And in the court of reason we will try,
If that good thoughts should believe jealousy.

Phil. Why, look ye, mother, this is 'long of you.—
For God's sake, father, hark! why, these effects
Come still from women's malice: part, I pray.—
Coomes, Will, and Hodge, come all, and help us part them!—
Father, but hear me speak one word—no more.

Fran. Father, but hear him speak, then use your will.

Phil. Cry peace between ye for a little while.

Mis. Gour. Good husband, hear him speak.

Mis. Bar. Good husband, hear him.

Coomes. Master, hear him speak; he's a good wise young stripling for his years, I tell ye, and perhaps may speak wiser than an elder body; therefore hear him.

Hod. Master, hear, and make an end; you may kill one another in jest, and be hanged in earnest.

Mast. Gour. Come, let us hear him. Then speak quickly, Philip.

Mast. Bar. Thou shouldst have done ere this; speak, Philip, speak.

Mis. Bar. O Lord, what haste you make to hurt yourselves!—
Good Philip, use some good persuasions
To make them friends.

Phil. Yes, I'll do what I can.—
Father and Master Goursey, both attend.

It is presumption in so young a man
To teach where he might learn, or to direct,
Where he hath had direction; but in duty
He may persuade as long as his persuase
Is backed with reason and a rightful suit.
Physic's first rule is this, as I have learned:
Kill the effect by cutting off the cause.
The same effects of ruffian outrages
Comes by the cause of malice in your wives;
Had not they two been foes, you had been friends,
And we had been at home, and this same war
In peaceful sleep had ne'er been dreamt upon.
Mother and Mistress Goursey, to make them friends,
Is to be friends yourselves: you are the cause,
And these effects proceed, you know, from you;
Your hates gives life unto these killing strifes,
But die, and if that envy[1] die in you.—
Fathers, yet stay.—O, speak!—O, stay a while!—
Francis, persuade thy mother.—Master Goursey,
If that thy mother will resolve[2] your mind
That 'tis but mere suspect, not common proof,
And if my father swear he's innocent,
As I durst pawn my soul with him he is,
And if your wife vow truth and constancy,
Will you be then persuaded?

Mast. Gour. Philip, if thy father will remit
The wounds I gave him, and if these conditions
May be performed, I banish all my wrath.

Mast. Bar. And if thy mother will but clear me, Philip.
As I am ready to protest I am,
Then Master Goursey is my friend again.

Phil. Hark, mother; now you hear that your desires
May be accomplished; they will both be friends,
If you'll perform these easy articles.

Mis. Bar. Shall I be friends with such an enemy?

Phil. What say you mother, unto my persuase?

[1] *i.e.* Ill-will. [2] Satisfy.

Mis. Bar. I say she is my deadly enemy.
Phil. Ay, but she will be your friend, if you revolt,
Mis. Bar. The words I said! what, shall I eat a truth?
Phil. Why, hark ye, mother.
Fran. Mother, what say you?
Mis. Gour. Why, this I say, she slandered my good name.
Fran. But if she now deny it, 'tis no defame.
Mis. Gour. What, shall I think her hate will yield so much?
Fran. Why, doubt it not; her spirit may be such.
Mis. Gour. Why, will it be?
Phil. Yet stay, I have some hope.
Mother, why, mother, why, hear ye:
Give me your hand; it is no more but thus;
'Tis easy labour to shake hands with her:
Little breath is spent in speaking of fair words,
When wrath hath violent delivery.
Mast. Bar. What, shall we be resolved?
Mis. Bar. O husband, stay!—
Stay, Master Goursey: though your wife doth hate me,
And bears unto me malice infinite
And endless, yet I will respect your safeties;
I would not have you perish by our means:
I must confess that only suspect,
And no proof else, hath fed my hate to her.
Mis. Gour. And, husband, I protest by Heaven and earth
That her suspect is causeless and unjust,
And that I ne'er had such a vile intent;
Harm she imagined, where as none was meant.
Phil. Lo, sir, what would ye more?
Mast. Bar. Yes, Philip, this;
That I confirm him in my innocence
By this large universe.
Mast. Gour. By that I swear,
I'll credit none of you, until I hear

Friendship concluded straight between them two :
If I see that they willingly will do,
Then I'll imagine all suspicion ends ;
I may be then assured, they being friends.
Phil. Mother, make full my wish, and be it so.
Mis. Bar. What, shall I sue for friendship to my foe ?
Phil. No : if she yield, will you ?
Mis. Bar. It may be, ay.
Phil. Why, this is well. The other I will try.—
Come, Mistress Goursey, do you first agree.
Mis. Gour. What, shall I yield unto mine enemy ?
Phil. Why, if she will, will you ?
Mis. Gour. Perhaps I will.
Phil. Nay, then, I find this goes well forward still.
Mother, give me your hand [*to* Mis. GOURSEY], give me yours too—
Be not so loth ; some good thing I must do ;
But lay your torches by, I like not them ;
Come, come, deliver them unto your men :
Give me your hands. So, now, sir, here I stand,
Holding two angry women in my hand :
And I must please them both ; I could please t'one,[1]
But it is hard when there is two to one,
Especially of women ; but 'tis so,
They shall be pleased, whether they will or no. —
Which will come first ? what, both give back ! ha, neither !
Why, then, yond help that both may come together.
So, stand still, stand still but a little while,
And see how I your angers will beguile.
Well, yet there is no hurt ; why, then, let me
Join these two hands, and see how they'll agree :
Peace, peace ! they cry ; look how they friendly kiss !
Well, all this while there is no harm in this :
Are not these twins ? twins should be both alike,
If t'one speaks fair, the t'other should not strike :

[1] *i.e.* The one.

Jesus, the warriors will not offer blows!
Why, then, tis strange that you two should be foes.
O yes, you'll say, your weapons are your tongues;
Touch lip with lip, and they are bound from wrongs:
Go to, embrace, and say, if you be friends,
That here the angry women's quarrel ends.

Mis. Gour. Then here it ends, if Mistress Barnes say so.

Mis. Bar. If you say ay, I list not to say no.

Mast. Gour. If they be friends, by promise we agree.

Mast. Bar. And may this league of friendship ever be

Phil. What say'st thou, Frank? doth not this fall out well?

Fran. Yes, if my Mall were here, then all were well.

Re-enter Sir RALPH SMITH *with* MALL, *who stays behind.*

Sir Ralph. Yonder they be, Mall: stay, stand close, and stir not
Until I call. God save ye, gentlemen!

Mast. Bar. What, Sir Ralph Smith! you are welcome, man:
We wondered when we heard you were abroad.

Sir Ralph. Why, sir, how heard ye that I was abroad?

Mast. Bar. By your man.

Sir Ralph. My man! where is he?

Will. Here.

Sir Ralph. O, ye are a trusty squire!

Nich. It had been better, an he had said, a sure card.

Phil. Why, sir?

Nich. Because it is the proverb.

Phil. Away, ye ass!

Nich. An ass goes o' four legs; I go of two, Christ cross.

Phil. Hold your tongue.

Nich. And make no more ado.

Mast. Gour. Go to, no more ado. Gentle Sir Ralph,

Your man is not in fault for missing you,
For he mistook by us, and we by him.
Sir Ralph. And I by you, which now I well perceive.
But tell me, gentlemen, what made ye all
Be from your beds this night, and why thus late
Are your wives walking here about the fields:
'Tis strange to see such women of accompt
Here; but I guess some great occasion prompt.
Mast. Gour. Faith, this occasion, sir: women will jar
And jar they did to-day, and so they parted;
We, knowing women's malice let alone
Will, canker-like, eat farther in their hearts,
Did seek a sudden cure, and thus it was:
A match between his daughter and my son;
No sooner motioned but it was agreed,
And they no sooner saw but wooed and liked:
They have it sought to cross, and crossed it thus.
Sir Ralph. Fie, Mistress Barnes and Mistress Goursey both;
The greatest sin wherein your souls may sin,
I think, is this, in crossing of true love:
Let me persuade ye.
Mis. Bar. Sir, we are persuaded,
And I and Mistress Goursey are both friends;
And, if my daughter were but found again,
Who now is missing, she had my consent
To be disposed of to her own content.
Sir Ralph. I do rejoice that what I thought to do,
Ere I begin, I find already done:
Why, this will please your friends at Abington.
Frank, if thou seek'st that way, there thou shalt find
Her, whom I hold the comfort of thy mind.
Mall. He shall not seek me; I will seek him out,
Since of my mother's grant I need not doubt.
Mis. Bar. Thy mother grants, my girl, and she doth pray
To send unto you both a joyful day!

Hod. Nay, Mistress Barnes, I wish her better: that those joyful days may be turned to joyful nights.

Coomes. Faith, 'tis a pretty wench, and 'tis pity but she should have him.

Nich. And, Mistress Mary, when ye go to bed, God send you good rest, and a peck of fleas in your nest, every one as big as Francis!

Phil. Well said, wisdom! God send thee wise children.

Nich. And you more money.

Phil. Ay, so wish I.

Nich. 'Twill be a good while, ere you wish your skin full of eyelet-holes.

Phil. Frank, hark ye: brother, now your wooing's done,
The next thing now you do is for a son,
I prythee; for i faith, I should be glad
To have myself called nunkle,[1] and thou dad.
Well, sister, if that Francis play the man,
My mother must be grandam and you mam.
To it, Francis—to it, sister!—God send ye joy!
'Tis fine to sing, dancey, my own sweet boy!

Fran. Well, sir, jest on.

Phil. Nay, do you jest[2] on.

Mast. Bar. Well, may she prove a happy wife to him!

Mast. Gour. And may he prove as happy unto her!

Sir Ralph. Well, gentlemen, good hap betide them both!
Since 'twas my hap thus happily to meet,
To be a witness of this sweet contract,
I do rejoice; wherefore, to have this joy
Longer present with me, I do request
That all of you will be my promised guests:
This long night's labour doth desire some rest,
Besides this wished end; therefore, I pray,
Let me detain ye but a dinner time:
Tell me, I pray, shall I obtain so much?

[1] A familiar contraction of "mine uncle." [2] Perform.

Mast. Bar. Gentle Sir Ralph, your courtesy is such,
As may impose command unto us all;
We will be thankful bold at your request.

Phil. I pray, Sir Ralph, what cheer shall we have?

Sir Ralph. I'faith, country fare, mutton and veal,
Perchance a duck or goose.

Mall. O, I am sick!

All. How now, Mall? what's the matter?

Mall. Father and mother, if you needs would know,
He named a goose, which is my stomach's foe.

Phil. Come, come, she is with child of some odd jest
And now she's sick, till that she bring it forth.

Mall. A jest, quoth you! well, brother, if it be,
I fear 'twill prove an earnest unto me.
Goose, said ye, sir? O, that same very name
Hath in it much variety of shame!
Of all the birds that ever yet was seen,
I would not have them graze upon this green;
I hope they will not, for this crop is poor,
And they may pasture upon greater store:
But yet 'tis pity that they let them pass,
And like a common bite the Muse's grass.
Yet this I fear: if Frank and I should kiss,
Some creaking goose would chide us with a hiss;
I mean not that goose that
Sings it knows not what;
'Tis not that hiss, when one says, "hist, come hither,'
Nor that same hiss that setteth dogs together,
Nor that same hiss that by a fire doth stand,
And hisseth T. or F.[1] upon the hand;
But 'tis a hiss, and I'll unlace my coat,[2]
For I should sound[3] sure, if I heard that note,
And then green ginger for the green goose cries,
Serves not the turn—I turned the white of eyes.

[1] *i.e.* Traitor or felon.

[2] Petticoat. Fr. *cotte.*

[3] Swoon

The *rosa-solis* [1] yet that makes me live
Is favour that these gentlemen may give;
But if they be displeased, then pleased am I
To yield myself a hissing death to die.
Yet I hope here is none consents to kill,
But kindly take the favour of good-will.
If anything be in the pen to blame,
Then here stand I to blush the writer's shame:
If this be bad, he promises a better;
Trust him, and he will prove a right true debtor.

[*Exeunt.*

[1] A strong spirituous liquor containing also cinnamon water and eggs.

JOHN DAY.



OHN DAY, "sometime Student of Caius College, Cambridge," a "base fellow" and a "rogue" according to Ben Jonson, a good man and a charming writer if the evidence of his own plays may be credited, seems to have come down to posterity in the person of his best work, and of little beside his best. When he began to write for the stage is not known,—before 1593, some have supposed—but we learn from Henslowe's Diary that in the six years from 1598 to 1603 he had a whole or part share in as many as twenty-two plays, only one of which, *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green*, has come down to us. These plays were :[1] in 1598, *The Conquest of Brute, with the first finding of the Bath* (Day, assisted by Chettle); in 1599, *The Tragedy of Merry* and *The Tragedy of Cox of Collumpton* (with Haughton), *The Orphan's Tragedy* (with Haughton and Chettle); in 1600, unassisted, *The Italian Tragedy of* . . . . [name wanting in the Diary], *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy* and *The Seven Wise Masters* (with Dekker and Haughton), *The Golden Ass, and Cupid and Psyche* (with Dekker and Chettle), *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green* (with Chettle); in 1601, *The Second Part of the Blind Beggar*, and *The Third Part* (also with Chettle), *The Conquest of the West Indies* (with Haughton and Wentworth Smith), *The Six Yeomen of the West, Friar Rush and the Proud Woman of Antwerp*, and *The Second Part of Tom Dough* (all three with Haughton); in 1602, unassisted, *The Bristol Tragedy; Merry as may be, The Black Dog of Newgate, The Second Part of the Black Dog, The Unfortunate General* (all with Hathway and Wentworth Smith), and *The*

[1] Bullen, article on Day in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Boast of Billingsgate (with Hathway and others); in 1603 or earlier, *Jane Shore* (with Chettle). In 1610, we learn from the Stationers' Register, Day wrote a play called *The Mad Pranks of Merry Moll of the Bankside;* in 1619, with Dekker, *The Life and Death of Guy of Warwick;* again with Dekker, in or before 1623, a "French tragedy" of *The Bellman of Paris;* and in 1623, a comedy, *Come see a Wonder.* Of extant plays, *The Isle of Gulls* was published in 1606; *The Travels of the Three English Brothers, Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, Mr. Robert Shirley* (written in conjunction with Rowley and Wilkins), in 1607; *Law-Tricks, or Who would have thought it,* and *Humour out of Breath,* in 1608; *The Parliament of Bees,* in 1641; and *The Blind Beggar* in 1659. There is also extant in the British Museum (Sloane MS. 3150) an allegorical prose tract entitled *Peregrinatio Scholastica,* first published in Mr. Bullen's collected edition of Day's works in 1881; a begging acrostic on the name of Thomas Dowton, an actor; an undated letter of Day from which we learn of a poem on *The Miracles of Christ;* a few autograph lines belonging to some lost historical play: "the rest is silence."[1]

It is not a pleasant thought that a writer of such dainty and select genius as the author of *The Parliament of Bees* should have had to labour so hard, on such unworthy material, for so unthankworthy a public as that which left him to borrow of Henslowe two shillings, or it may be five shillings —"in Redy money," as the record quaintly states. That the main part at least of these lost plays was but journeyman's work, work sufficient to the day and the evil thereof, seems evident from the mere titles, a small proportion no doubt of the whole, that have come down to us. Even Mr. Bullen finds it impossible to regret the loss; and he would be content to spare the *Three English Brothers* and the *Blind Beggar* as well. The fact is, Day's range is exceptionally limited, and outside his circle he has no magic.

In turning over the pages of Lamb's *Specimens,* it is with something of relief, after so much that is bloody and gloomy, that we come on the two or three brief extracts from *The*

[1] Two plays, *The Return from Parnassus* (in three parts) and *The Maid's Metamorphosis,* have been attributed to Day, but without any probability.

Parliament of Bees, by which alone, for so long a space of time, the name of John Day was known to English readers. They are so light and bright, so delicate in the wording and phrasing, so aloof and apart from the commonness of every-day doings, or the sombre action of that little world of the Elizabethan drama. The choicest of Day's work comes with just such a sense of relief to the student who has traversed that country widely. It is a wayside rest, a noontide hour in the cool shadow of the woods. There is something so pleasant about the work, that we find ourselves pardoning its faults and overlooking its shortcomings, almost without thinking about them. Day—it is clear if we really consider the matter—has but a very slight insight into human nature, only a very faint power of touching or moving us, no power whatever to mould a coherent figure or paint a full-length portrait; as to plot, he is content with none at all, as in the *Bees*, or, as in the other three comedies, the plot is of such fantastic and intricate slightness, a very spider's-web of filmy threads, that it is not to be grasped without coming to pieces. His wit is a clear flame, but thin and only intermittent. Day's natural gift in that way is not so rich that it can stand a long draw on its exchequer. The good money becomes used up, and then, instead of putting up the shutters, the bank passes bad currency. All these are serious faults; they are leaks enough to sink a weightier reputation; but, somehow, they do no more than temper our delight in Day. The world of his fancy is not the world of our common sunlight; and life is lived otherwise, and men and women are somewhat other than the men and women of our knowledge, there. It is a land into which the laws of logic can scarcely come; a land where gentle and petulant figures come and go like figures in a masque, aimlessly enough, yet to measure, always with happy effect, threading the forest paths as we see ourselves in dreams, dreams sleeping or waking, ever on the heels of some pleasing or exciting adventure. The conversation, whenever it is good, is carried on in jests, or in flights of lyrical fancy, somewhat as in Shakespeare's early comedies, somewhat with a sort of foretaste of the comedies of Congreve. If it is not the talk of real life, it is at least a select rendering of our talk at its brightest and freest, when black care is away, and the brain is quickened and the tongue loosened by some happy

chance, among responsive friends in tune with a blithe mood. It is how we should often *like* to talk; and that accord with our likings of things, as apart from our consciousness, not always pleasant, of them, is the secret of a certain harmony we seem to feel in those parts of Day's comedies which are least like life. He steps quite through the ugly surface of things, freeing us, as we take the step with him, of all the disabilities of our never quite satisfied existence.

This land of fancy to which Day leads us, is essentially quite as much a land of fancy in the comedies which profess to chronicle the doings of men and women, as in the comedy whose dramatis personæ are all bees. In *The Isle of Gulls*, *Law-Tricks* and *Humour out of Breath*, equally as to the spirit of it, very differently as regards the point of execution, Day has painted life as it pleased him to see it—in a delightful confusion, made up of entanglements, disguises, jests, sudden adventures, good-hearted merriment, a comedy within a comedy. Compared with *Humour out of Breath*, the two other plays have a certain coarseness of texture—comparative only, let it be understood; the action is not so pleasant, nor the wit so spontaneous. They are immensely lively, always entertaining, ravelled up with incomparable agility, full of business, wit and humour; breaking every now and then into seriousness, and, in the later play particularly, blossoming out quite unexpectedly into a tender and lyrical pathos; as in that scene where the forsaken countess talks with such sweet sadness to her maids as they sit at their sewing—a little passage of pure exquisiteness, reminding one, as now and again Day will remind us, of certain of the loveliest bits of Shakespeare. In another single scene in *The Isle of Gulls*, the tennis-court scene, we find a quite typical example of Day's special variety of wit, thin and captious indeed, but swift in its interchange of strokes as the tennis-balls, flying to and fro, with sharp and harmless knocks, in repartees deftly delivered and straight to their aim. It is in *Humour out of Breath*, however,—so suggestively named, and so truly, for the little play keeps us breathless at the heels of its breathless actors—here, rather than anywhere else outside *The Parliament of Bees*, that the special note of Day's cheerful genius is heard most clearly. It has his finest polish, the cream of his wit, the pick of his women.

Day's women are singularly charming: they are all of one type, and that no very subtle one, but they are immensely likeable, and in this play we have the very best of them,—Florimel, Emilia's sister, Hippolyta's and Violetta's, but the most beautiful and brilliant of her sisters. Emilia, in *Law-Tricks*, reminds us, by anticipation, of Millimant; as Miso, in *The Isle of Gulls*, with her "As I am a Lady," seems almost like a faint foreshadowing of the most tragic figure on the English Comic stage, Lady Wishfort. But Florimel, calling up no associations of Congreve or any other, proves the most delightful of companions. She, like her sisters, is a creature of moods, bright, witty, full of high spirits, very free-spoken, but less free in action than in speech; a thoroughly English girl, perhaps the ideal of our favourite mettlesome breed. You can see her lips and eyes in a smile, flashing as her saucy words; and she is good-hearted, capable of strength in love. Here, as so often elsewhere, Day's instinctive sympathy with whatsoever is honest, lovely and of good report, shows itself in unthought-of touches. He cannot conceive a villain; his fantastic figures and the fantasy of his action have alike a basis of honesty and rectitude, never intrusive, scarcely visible perhaps, often, but there if we choose to look for it. Just this quality, going out into very homely material, gives to the hasty, irregular, rough and romping play of *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green* a saving grace, not of morals, but of art; for it is a touch of nature. Touches of nature there are, but of another kind, in *Humour out of Breath;* always, however sincere, however serious, with an after-thought or atmosphere of brightness in or about them: as in Aspero's wooing of Florimel, passing out of jests and quibbles into hearty earnest, earnest from the first perhaps on both sides, though the lady has a dancing wit, and the gentleman goads a sober tongue to curvets. How pretty a touch of nature is this: "I cannot live without him!" cries Florimel, when her saucy petulance has driven away her lover. "O that he knew it, lady," suggests the quick-witted little page, at fault for once in a lover's moods; for, "He does," returns Florimel, never at fault; "he would never have left me else. He does!" Touches of this sort, true to nature in the more intimate and subtle sense, are not common in Day; he is not wont to reveal anything new to us in our own hearts, or

to go often below the surface. It would be unfair to lay this to his charge, for he does not profess to give us more than we find n him. "Humour out of breath," a world where wit is the all in all—this is what he gives us; a world, how delightful to contemplate, where men and women are so careful of their jests, and the measure and harmony of this absorbing play-business, that they will even (as Polymeter says on some occasion, in another play) "leave at a jest," and turn the conversation after a period of punning.

I have said that the scene of these three comedies is virtually a land of fancy; in *The Parliament of Bees* it is not only virtually but formally so. No instinct could have been happier than that which led Day—could it have been with any thought of Aristophanes?—to turn the "men and women fashioned by his fancy" into bees, and give them a whole play to themselves. That this was an afterthought, only come upon after a large part of what now forms the play was written, seems evident; for, as Mr. Bullen has pointed out, "with the exception of characters 1, 11, and 12, which were plainly written for the occasion, the masque seems to have been made up of scenes, more or less revised, contributed to [Dekker's] *Wonder of a Kingdom*, [Samuel Rowley's] *Spanish Soldier*, and other plays that have either been lost or where the connection remains yet to be pointed out." There is not even an attempt at anything like a plot; what we have is a sequence of scenes, sketching, and lightly satirising, the "humours" of the age under this queer disguise of the bees. It is doubtful whether Day ever intended it, but in this fantastic masque of his there are all the elements of an heroically comic picture of life; life seen from the point of view of an outside observer, in all its eager stir and passion, so petty and so vain if one could look down on it from above—in all its strenuous littlenesses, its frail strength, its gigantic self-delusions; petty, all of it, to the Gods, as these tiny creatures, with their insect life of a summer, seem to men. Here is the quack, the braggart, the spendthrift, each with all the passions of a man—and just as long as your nail! But if this view enters at all into Day's scheme, it is suffered to add no bitterness, no touch of spleen, to this sweet and gracious little play, revised, as we know from an earlier manuscript still existing, with such a tender care, not only for the clear polish of the lines, but equally for the pleasant

wholesomeness of the story, the honesty and fair fame of the little personages. Quite the best scene, the sixth, between Arethusa and Ulania concerning Meletus, has gained the most from this revision: it is free now from any speck, and is one of the loveliest pastorals in our language, a little masterpiece of dainty invention, honey-hearted and without a sting; touching at one point, in the last speech of the poor neglected bee, the last limits of Day's capacity for pensive and tender pathos. Nothing in the play is so bee-like, nothing so human, as this all-golden episode; though in pastoral loveliness it is touched, I think, by the wood-notes of the final octosyllabics—verses of exquisite inappropriateness for bees, but with all the smell and freshness of the country in them, a pageant of the delightful things of nature and husbandry, written in rhymes that gambol in pairs like lambs or kids in spring.

Without *The Parliament of Bees* we should never have known what Day was capable of. The wit and invention of his comedies of adventure make up, it is true, a very distinct and a very important part of his claim on the attention of posterity; but these comedies, after all, are very largely written, especially in the best parts of them, in prose, and it is as a poetical craftsman that Day is most himself and most perfect. Such a line as this:

> "Who then shall reap the golden crop you sow?

bears the very sign and seal of Day. Or, again:

> "The windows of my hive, with blossoms dight,
> Are porters to let in our comfort, light.'

Our comfort, light—the very cadence of these beautiful words rings of Day, and the meaning equally with the sound. His peculiar vein of fancy comes out typically in those lines where the Plush Bee longs, like Alexander, for "ten worlds"—indeed to sell, but to sell "*for Alpine hills of silver*," so prettily extravagant, so new and unthought-of a phrase. Familiar and quite ordinary ideas, commonplace thoughts, take in his mind an aspect which gives them all the charm of a pleasing novelty—a fanciful aspect, very fresh and pleasant, the good cheer of fancy. There is often an airy spring in his moods, lifting his honest commonplaces quite



THE only extant edition of *The Parliament of Bees* is the quarto of 1641. Mention is made, however, of a quarto of 1607 in Gildon's edition of Langbaine's *Dramatick Poets*, 1699, in Giles Jacob's *Poetical Register*, 1719, in the *Companion to the Playhouse*, 1764, and by Charles Lamb in the *Extracts from the Garrick Plays*. No search has been able to reveal the existence of any copy of this early edition, and it seems probable that no such edition ever existed. Granted an error in the first authority, Gildon,—who might, as Mr. Bullen suggests, have confused the date of the *Bees* with that of the *Three English Brothers*—it is easy to conceive that the later writers may have merely copied his erroneous statement. Besides the quarto of 1641 there is, however, a contemporary transcript, evidently of earlier date, now preserved among the Lansdowne MSS. (No. 725) entitled: "An olde Manuscript conteyning the Parliament of Bees, found In a Hollow Tree In a garden at Hibla, in a strandge Languadge, And now faithfully Translated into Easie English Verse by

John Day,
Cantabrig.

Ovidius mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castaliis plena ministret aquis."

The MS. has been carefully collated with the quarto by Mr. Bullen in his edition of Day's Works. Occasionally a reading is superior; sometimes so good that one is sorry to

lose it, though in its revised form it has certainly gained a finer finish; often plainly and largely inferior. The MS. contains an address "To the Impartial Reader" not printed in the quarto (this I have given after the dedication); and the dedication is different in MS. and in quarto. That of the MS. wishes "To the Noble and right worthie Gentleman Mr. William Augustine Esquier All Earthly Happines & Heavenly Beatitude." It is of sufficient interest to be given in full:—

"Noble Sir,

The first and last bottom that ever I launched upon the strange (and to me then unknown) sea called Mare Dedicatorium, was bound for Cape Bona Speranza, where your worship was governor. An the most of my lading (at that time being an unknowing venturer) were but *feriae nugae* at the best, yet they returned me more than a desired gratuity, which emboldened me to a second adventure, fraught with a more pleasing and vendible commodity; for, though I want both art and impudence to mountebank, and apish indulgence to over-hug mine own, yet in a modest confidence I presume that with much dross ye shall find some gold, and amongst many pebbles, here and there a pearl, worthy to be worn in the ear of your memory. *Sed quo trahor?* I lecture my tutor, and read law-cases to my judge. I will therefore descend from the bench to the bar, hold up my guilty hand, and with Ovid cry—

En hic Judicio Stove Cadove tuo.[1] [*sic.*]

Yours in all service,

JOHN DAY, Cant."

As for the readings of the MS., all of which, to the most trifling difference, are given by Mr. Bullen, I have used my discretion in selecting those, and only those, which I conceive to be of distinct value and real interest. Among them will be found much that is decidedly worth preserving. I have not, except in a very few instances, duly notified in

[1] Possibly, says Mr. Bullen, a misquotation from the dedication of the *Fasti*, i. 18–19:

"Da mihi te placidum, dederis in carmine vires,
Ingenium voltu statque caditque tuo."

their proper places, introduced a MS. reading into the text whatever might seem to be its relative merit; even if I had wished to do so I should scarcely have felt justified in so doing, for we are bound to read an author as he wishes himself to be read, and there is no doubt that the quarto is Day's revised and final text: still, I cannot say that the temptation has been ever very strong. Day was a true artist, and not merely does he usually improve what he alters, but even in those cases where he has omitted something in itself really good, we cannot but feel, often, that his goldsmith's-file has 'enriched the work by far more than the weight of the precious metal it has removed."



To the worthy Gentleman

MR. GEORGE BUTLER,

Professor of the Arts Liberal, and true Patron to neglected Poesie,

All Health and Happiness.

Worthy Sir,

I may be thought bold, if not impudent, upon so little acquaintance to make this saucy trespass upon your patience; but Fame, whose office (like the Nomenclators at Rome) is to take notice and proclaim the name and virtues of every noble personage, has given you out for so ingenuous a professor of the Arts and so bountiful a patron of poor scholars, it has emboldened me to present my Hive of Bees to your favourable protection. And when I remember how Lewis, the eleventh of that name, King of France, took notice and bountifully rewarded a decayed gardener who presented him with a bunch of carrots, I doubt not of their kind and generous entertainment; upon which assurance I rest ever,

Yours in all service devote,

JOHN DAY.

To the Impartial Reader.

READER, I prithee be either so careful to understand me or so courteous as not to read me. Old father Seton[1] told me long ago that *Inventio et Judicium* were the main grounds Logic was built upon; and sure I am that they are the two feet that Poetry walks upon. The first of the two I have provided for, though in the latter I request you to be assistant to me, that if my invention chance to prove a heteroclite, in any limb lame or defective, thy judgment like a true grammarian may rectify and set it upright. I observe the same method in my characters (or if you will, colloquies) as Persius did in his satires: bringing in the Bees themselves, speaking themselves, by which the author's invention is more lively expressed, the ingenuous reader's understanding more easily and fully answered. I hope I have not committed so many errors as thy generosity would find, and yet I fear more than thy courtesy will mind: to content the judicious I hold it no great miracle, and therefore have some hope on't. But to please all: *Hic labor, hoc opus est:* and I utterly despair on't. And so must rest

Thine as thou usest me,

JO. DAY.

[1] "A celebrated logician of his day, whose *Dialectics*, published in 1572, passed through several editions. Randolph (*Hey for Honesty*, ii. 5) makes a complimentary allusion to him."—*Bullen.*



THE AUTHOR'S COMMISSION TO HIS BEES.

ABROAD, my pretty Bees: I hope you'll find
Neither rough tempest nor commanding wind
To check your flight. Carry an humble wing;
Buzz boldly what I bid, but do not sting
Your generous patron: wheresoe'er you come
Feed you on wax, leave them the honey-comb.
Yet, if you meet a tart antagonist
Or discontented rugged satirist
That slights your errand or his Art that penned it,
Cry *tanti*:[1] bid him kiss his Muse—and mend it.
If then they mew,[2] reply not you, but bring
Their names to me; I'll send out wasps shall sting
Their malice to the quick: if they cap words,
Tell 'em your master is a-twisting cords
Shall make pride skip. If I must needs take pains,
'Tshall be to draw blood from detraction's veins:
Though shrivelled like parchment, Art can make 'em bleed;
And what I vow Apollo has decreed.
Your whole commission in one line's enrolled:
Be valiantly free, but not too bold.

JOHN DAY.

[1] Compare *Isle of Gulls*, Prologue:

> "Detraction he scorns, honours the best:
> *Tanti* for hate, thus low to all the rest."

[2] To mew was a very ordinary way of expressing dissatisfaction in an Elizabethan audience.



THE BOOK TO THE READER.

IN my commission I am charged to greet
And mildly kiss the hands of all I meet;
Which I must do, or never more be seen
About the fount of sacred Hippocrene.
Smooth-socked Thalia takes delight to dance
I' the Schools of Art; the door of ignorance
She sets a cross on; detractors she doth scorn,
Yet kneels to censure (so it be true born).
I had rather fall into a beadle's hands
That reads, and with his reading understands,
Than some plush Midas that can read no further
But "Bees? whose penning? Mew!" This man doth murther
A writer's credit; and wronged Poesie
(Like a rich diamond dropped into the sea)
Is by him lost for ever. Quite through read me,
Or 'mongst waste paper into pasteboard knead me;
Press me to death, so—though your churlish hands
Rob me of life—I'll save my paper lands
For my next heir, who with poetic breath
May in sad elegy record my death.
If so: I wish my epitaph may be
Only three words—"Opinion[1] murdered me."

LIBER LECTORI CANDIDO.

[1] "Opinion," referred to so often by Day, means what we should now call the public taste, or the taste of the "general reader." In the MS. the word was harsher, but carrying much the same weight —"Ignorance."

THE

PARLIAMENT OF BEES.

CHARACTER I.

PROREX, OR THE MASTER BEE'S CHARACTER.

A Parliament is held, bills and complaints
Referred and heard, with several restraints
Of usurped freedom, instituted law,
To keep the commonwealth of Bees in awe.

Speakers: PROREX, VILLICUS,[1] ŒCONOMICUS, DICASTES, SPEAKER.



RO. To us, who warranted by Oberon's love
Write ourself Master Bee, both field and grove,
Garden and orchard, lawns and flowery meads
(Where the amorous wind plays with the golden heads
Of wanton cowslips,[2] daisies in their prime,

[1] Printed "Aulicus" in the edition of 1641.

[2] The MS., which compresses the first twelve lines into eight, has these pretty lines not represented in the text:—

Whilst the youthful Spring
Lies on a bed of roses, wantoning
With blushing Flora.

Sun-loving marigolds, the blossomed thyme,
The blue-veined violets, and the damask rose,
The stately lily, mistress of all those)
Are allowed and given by Oberon's free arede[1]
Pasture for me and all my swarms to feed.
Now, that our will and sovereign intent
May be made known, we call this parliament;
And as the wise determiner of power
Proportioned time to moments, minutes, hours,
Weeks, months, years, ages;[2] distinguished day from night,
Winter from summer, profundity from height
In sublunaries; as in the course of heaven
The bodies metaphysical run even,
Zeniths and zones have their apt stations,
Planets and stars their constellations
With orbs to move in, so divinely made
Some spherically move, some retrograde,
Yet all keep course; so shall it be our care
That every family have his proper sphere.
And, to that purpose, Villicus be groom
Of all our lodgings, and provide fit room
To lay in wax and honey, both for us
And all our household: Œconomicus,
Be you our steward, carefully to fit
Quotidian diet, and so order it
Each may have equal portion; and, beside
Needful provision, carefully provide
Store against war and famine: Martio, thee
I have found valiant; thy authority
(Being approved for discipline in arms)
Shall be to muster up our warlike swarms

[1] An uncommon word. Compare Antony Munday's *Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon*, 1601:—

Now must your honour leave these mourning tunes,
And thus by my *areed* you shall provide.—*Bullen.*

[2] MS. Weeks, months and years.

Of wingèd lances; for, like a peaceful king
Although we are, we are loth to use our sting.
Speaker, inform us what petitions
Our Commons put up at these sessions.

A Bill preferred against the Humble Bee.

Speak. A bill preferred against a public wrong,
The surly Humble Bee, who hath too long
Lived like an outlaw, and will neither pay
Honey nor wax, do service nor obey;
But like a felon, couched under a weed,
Watches advantage to make boot[1] and feed
Upon the top-branch blossoms, and by stealth
Makes dangerous inroads on your commonwealth,
Robs the day-labourer of his golden prize
And sends him weeping home with empty thighs.
Thus, like a thief, he flies o'er hill and down,
And outlaw-like doth challenge as his own
Your highness' due; nay, piratic[2] detains
The waxen fleet sailing upon your plains.

Pro. A great abuse, which we must have redressed
Before it grows too high: on to the rest.

A Bill preferred against the Wasp.

Speak. A bill preferred against the Wasp; a fly
Who, merchant-like, under pretence to buy,
Makes bold to borrow, and pays too.

Pro. But when?

Speak. Why *ad Kalendas Græcas;* never then.

A Bill against the Hornet.

There's the strange Hornet,[3] who doth ever wear
A scaly armour and a double spear
Couched in his front; rifles the merchant's packs

[1] Profit. [2] MS. Pirate-like.
[3] MS. The highway Hornet.

Upon the road; your honey and your wax
He doth by stealth transport to some strange shore,
Makes rich their hives and keeps your own groves poor.

Pro. I thank your industry, but we'll devise
A statute that no such outlandish flies
Shall carry such high wing.

A Bill preferred against the Drone.

Speak. Yet these alone
Do not afflict us, but the lazy Drone,
Our native country bee, who, like the snail
That bankrupt-like [1] makes his own shell his jail
All the day long, i'the evening plays the thief;
And when the labouring bees have ta'en relief,
Be gone to rest, against all right and law
Acts burglary, breaks ope their house of straw,
And not alone makes pillage of their hives
But, butcher-like, bereaves them of their lives.

Pro. 'Gainst all these outlaws, Martio, be thou
Lieutenant-General; thou know'st well how
To hamper such delinquents. Dicastes, thee
We make our advocate; thy office be
To moderate each difference and jar
In this our civil œconomic war,
And let both plaintiff and defendant be
Heard and despatched for conscionable fee.
And more, to keep our Anomoi [2] in awe,
Ourself, the chief, will live under a law.[3]

Dic. To each desert I'll render lawful weight,
The scale of justice shall use no deceit.

Pro. It loses name and nature if it should.
Next, Villicus, thou that frequent'st the wood,

[1] A similar passage occurs in Dekker's *Seven Deadly Sins* (Arber's reprint, p. 25).—*Bullen.*

[2] Ἄνομοι, lawless ones; or, as the marginal gloss has it, *sine lege viventes.*

[3] MS. adds: To shut up all, Dicastes, here we make
Thee our lawgiver: given should never take

Our painful russet bee, we create thee
Chief bailiff both of fallow-field and lea.[1]
Appoint each bee his walk; the meadow-bee
Shall not encroach upon the upland lea,
But keep his bound; if any, with intent
To wrong our state, fly from our government,
Hoarding their honey up in rocks or trees,
Sell or transport it to our enemies;
Break down their garners, seize upon their store,
And in our name divide it 'mongst the poor.
Only to us reserve our royalties,
High-ways and wastes; all other specialties
We make thee ruler of.

Vil. And I'll impart
To all with a free hand and faithful heart.

Pro. Now break up court, and each one to his toil;
Thrive by your labours,—drones live on the spoil;
Fear neither wasp nor hornet; foreigners
Be barred from being intercommoners;
And, having laboured hard from light to light,
With golden thighs come singing home at night;
For neither drone, wasp, fly nor humble-bee
Shall dare to rob you of your treasury.[2]
So to your summer harvest; work and thrive:
Bounty's the blessing of the labourer's hive.[3]

[1] MS.—Fields tilled and fallow, headland summer leas,
Hillocks and meres, gardens and blossomed trees,
Each knows his walk.

[2] These lines follow in the MS.:—
Yet our advice in your field voyage take:
Under each gaudy leaf there lurks a snake
Who in a golden skin houses a breath
So rank, 'twill sting a silly bee to death,
Kill life and credit; this proud buskined actor
That smiles and kills, we title the detractor:
Beware of him, or your poor innocent lives
Are not secure abroad nor in your hives.

[3] MS. has two additional lines:—
All. That blessing, Oberon, we will deserve.
Pro. Do, and enjoy it: only the loiterers starve.

CHARACTER II.

ELEEMOZYNUS, the HOSPITABLE BEE.

The author in his russet bee
Characters hospitality;
Describes his hive, and for his feasts
Appoints fit days and names his guests.

Speakers: ELEEMOZYNUS, CORDATO.



OR. Your hive's a rare one; Rome did never raise
A work of greater wonder.
Elee. Spare your praise.
'Tis finished, and the cost stands on no score;
None can for want of payment at my door
Curse my foundation, seeing the smoke go
Out of those loovers [1] for whose straw I owe.[2]

[1] *L'Ouvert*, opening in the roof. Compare Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, book 6:—

"Nor lighted was with window or with *loover*,
But with continual candle-light."—*Bullen.*

[2] Here follow some lines in the MS., omitted in the printed copy:—

Cor. It is a sumptuous building: pray, sir, what
Mounts the grand sum to?
Elee. Pray ne'er question that.
Cor. Shall not the world take note what you ha' done?
Elee. No, I launch forth no ship with flag and gun
To trumpet and proclaim my gallantry.
He that will read my acts of charity
Shall find 'em writ in ashes, which the wind
Shall scatter ere he spells them: Fate unkind

Cor. Why to your hive have ye so many ways?

Elee. They answer just the number of seven days.
Mondays on such whose fortunes are sunk low
By good housekeeping, I'll my alms bestow:
On Tuesdays, such as all their life times wrought
Their country's freedom and her battles fought:
On Wednesdays, such as with painful wit
Have dived for knowledge in the Sacred Writ:
On Thursdays, such as proved unfortunate
In council and high offices of state:
On Fridays, such as for their conscience' sake
Are kept in bonds: on Saturdays I'll make
Feasts for poor bees past labour, orphan fry,
And widows ground in mills of usury:
And Sundays for my tenants and all swains
That labour for me on the groves and plains.
The windows of my hive, with blossoms dight,
Are porters to let in our comfort, light;
In number just three hundred sixty-five,[1]
'Cause in so many days the sun doth drive
His chariot, stuck with beams of burnished gold,
About the world, by spherical motion rolled.
For my alms shall diurnal progress make
With the free sun in his bright zodiac.

Cor. Some bees set all their tenants on the rack,
Not to feed bellies, but to clothe the back.

Elee. I with their actions hold no sympathy:
Such eat the poor up, but the poor eat me.

Cor. And you'll perform all this?

Her wheel may turn, and I that build thus high
May by the storms of want be driven to die.
In some old ruinous beeskep: envy shall not then
Spit poison at me ('t has been so 'mongst men:
Why not with bees then?) pinning on my back
This card: He that spent thus much now doth lack.

The word "beeskep" (*i.e.* beehive) is still used in Yorkshire according to Mr. Ebsworth, for a hive made of woven straw or wicker-work.

[1] Quarto and MS. Six hundred sixty-five.

Elee. Fair and upright
As are the strict vows of an anchorite.
An alms that by a niggard's hand is served
Is mould and gravelly bread; the hunger-starved
May take, but cannot eat: I'll deal none such.
Who with free hand shakes out but crumbs gives much.

Cor. You'll have bad helps in this good course of life:
You might do therefore well to take a wife.

Elee. A wife? When I should have one hand in heaven
To write my happiness, in leaves as even
And smooth as porphyry, she'd by the other
Pluck me quite down: virtue scarce knows a mother.
Pardon, sweet females; I your sex admire,
But dare not sit too near your wanton fire,
Fearing your fairer beauties' tempting flame
My sound affections might put out of frame.[1]

Cor. Who then shall reap the golden crop you sow?
Tis half a curse to have wealth, and not to know
Whom to call heir.

Elee. My heirs shall be the poor:
Bees wanting limbs, such as in days of yore
Penned learnèd canzons,[2] for no other meed
But that in them unlettered bees might read,
And, reading, lay up knowledge—being alive,
Such I'll maintain, and, being dead, my hive,
Honey and wax I will bequeath to build
A skep, where weekly meetings may be held
To read and hear such ancient moral saws
As may teach ignorance the use of laws.
And these will be a true inheritance,
Not to decay; neither sword, fire, nor chance,
Thunder of Jove, nor mundane casualties

[1] The following prosaic interruption, which does not appear in the MS., I have relegated to its proper place as a foot-note:—
In like manner, said Alexander by the daughters of Darius:
Nescio quid latentis veneni habet caro fœminea
Ut prudentiores citius corrumpat.

[2] Songs.

Can ruin the succession of these:
Manors, parks, towns, nay kingdoms may be sold,
But still the poor stand, like a lord's freehold,
Unforfeited: of all law-tricks not one
Can throw the poor out of possession.[1]
Should I lose all my hives and waxen wealth,
Out of the poor man's dish I should drink health,
Comfort, and blessings; therefore keep aloof
And tempt no further: whilst I live my roof
Shall cover naked wretches; when I die
I'll dedicate it to Saint Charity.

CHARACTER III.

THRASO, or POLYPRAGMUS, the PLUSH BEE.

Invention here doth character
A mere vainglorious reveller,
Who scorns his equals, grinds the poor,
Haunts only riots and his ———.[2]

Speakers: POLYPRAGMUS, Servant.



OL. The room smells: foh, stand off.—
Yet stay; d'ye hear
O' the saucy sun which, mounted in our sphere,
Strives to outshine us?

[1] MS. adds:—Till death himself comes: yet then like Hydra's breed
As one deceases three others will succeed.

[2] So in original.

Serv. So the poor bees hum.

Pol. Poor bees! potguns,[1] illegitimate scum,
And bastard flies, taking adulterate shape
From reeking dunghills! If that meddling ape,
Zanying my greatness, dares but once presume
To vie expense with me, I will consume
His whole hive in a month. Say, you that saw
His new-raised frame, how is it built?

Serv. Of straw
Dyed in quaint colours; here and there a row
Of Indian bents,[2] which make a handsome show.

Pol. How! straw and bents, say'st? I will have one built
Like Pompey's theatre; the ceiling gilt
And interseamed with pearl, to make it shine
Like high Jove's palace: my descent's divine.
My great hall I'll have paved with clouds; which done,
By wondrous skill, an artificial sun
Shall roll about, reflecting golden beams,
Like Phœbus dancing on the wanton streams.
And when 'tis night, just as that sun goes down,
I'll have the stars draw up a silver moon
In her full height of glory. Overhead
A roof of woods and forests I'll have spread,
Trees growing downwards, full of fallow-deer;
When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear
A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring
Actæon to Diana in the spring,
Where all shall see her naked skin; and there
Actæon's hounds shall their own master tear,
As emblem of his folly that will keep
Hounds to devour and eat him up asleep.
All this I'll do that men with praise may crown
My fame for turning the world upside-down.
—And what plush bees sit at this flesh-fly's table?

[1] Mock guns. [2] A tough, wiry species of grass.

Serv. None but poor lame ones and the ragged rabble.

Pol. My board shall be no manger for scabbed jades
To lick up provender; no bee that trades
Sucks honey there.

Serv. Poor scholars—

Pol. Beg and starve,
Or steal and hang; what can such rogues deserve?
—Gallows and gibbets, hang 'em. Give me lutes,
Viols and clarions; such music suits.
Scholars, like common beadles, lash the times,
Whip our abuse, and fetch blood of our crimes.
Let him feed hungry scholars, fetch me whores;
They are man's bliss; the other, kingdoms' sores.
We gave in charge to seek the grove for bees
Cunning[1] in cookery and rare qualities;
And wanton females that sell sin for gold.

Serv. Some of all sorts you have.

Pol. They are stale and old;
I have seen 'em twice.

Serv. We have multiplied your store
Unto a thousand.

Pol. More; let me have more
Than the Grand Signior; and my change as rare—
Tall, low, and middle-sized, the brown and fair.
I'd give a prince his ransom now to taste
Black[2] Cleopatra's cheek, only to waste
A richer pearl than that of Antony's,
That fame might write up my name and raze his.
O that my mother had been Paris' whore
And I might live to burn down Troy once more,
So that by that brave light I might have ran
At barley-brake with my sleek courtesan.
Yet talk'st of scholars? see my face no more;
Let the portcullis down and bolt the door.

[1] So MS.; quarto has Coming. [2] MS. Swart.

But one such tattered ensign here being spread
Would draw in numbers: here must no rogue[1] be fed.
Charge our mechanic bees to make things meet
To manacle base beggars' hands and feet;
And call it Polypragmus' whipping-post,
Or the beggars' ordinary; they shall taste my roast.
And if ye spy a bee that has a look
Stigmatical,[2] drawn out like a black book
Full of Greek π's,[3] to such I'll give large pay
To watch and ward for poor bees night and day,
And lash 'em soundly if they approach my gate:
Whipcord's my bounty, and the rogues shall ha't.
The poor are but the earth's dung, fit to lie
Covered in muck-heaps, not offend our eye.
Thus in your bosoms Jove his bounty flings.
What are gold mines but a rich dust for kings
To scatter with their breath, as chaff with wind?
Let me then have gold, bear a king's mind
And give till my arm aches: who bravely pours
But into a wench's lap such golden showers,[4]
May be Jove's equal,—there his ambition ends
In obscure rivalship; but he that spends
A world of wealth, makes a whole world his debtor
And such a noble spender is Jove's better.
That man I'll be, I'm Alexander's heir
To one part of his mind: I wish there were
Ten worlds.

Serv. How, sir! to conquer?[5]

Pol. No, to sell
For Alpine hills of silver; I could well

[1] So in MS.; the quarto has "my rogues;" Mr. Bullen reads, "here shall no rogues."

[2] Used in its original sense of branded. "*Stigmatical*, that is burnt with an hot iron."—*Gabriel Harvey*, quo. by Bullen.

[3] A fanciful resemblance to the gallows was found in the Greek π.—*Bullen.*

[4] MS. ——who freely pours
Into his Danae's lap such golden showers.

[5] So in MS. Quarto has, How, for to conquer?

Husband that merchandize, provided I
Might at one feast draw all that treasure dry.
Who hoards up wealth is base; who spends it, brave:
Earth breeds gold, so I tread but on my slave.
Serv. O wonderful! yet let all wonder pass:
He's a great bee, and a vain-glorious ass.

CHARACTER IV.

ARMIGER, the FIELD BEE.

The poet under Armiger
Shadows a soldier's character;
His worth, the courtier's coy neglect,
His pen doth sparingly detect.

Speakers: ARMIGER, DON COCADILLIO, PROREX.

ARM.[1] Is Master Bee at leisure to speak Spanish
With a bee of service?
Coc. No.
Arm. Smoked pilchard,[2] vanish! Proud Don with the ochre face, I'd but desire
To meet thee on a breach midst smoke and fire;
And, for tobacco, whizzing gunpowder
Out of a brazen pipe that should puff louder

[1] Lines 1—8 are not in the MS.
[2] Pilchard was formerly used as a term of contempt.

Than thunder roars. There, though, illiterate daw,
Thou ne'er couldst spell, thou shouldst read canon law.
How the jades prance in golden trappings!—Ho!
Is Master Bee at leisure?
Coc. What to do?
Arm. To hear a soldier speak.
Coc. I cannot tell,
I am no ear-picker.
Arm. Yet you hear well.
Ye're of the Court?
Coc. The Master Bee's chief barber.
Arm. Then, Don, you lied: you are an ear-picker.
Coc. Well if thou comest to beg a suit at Court,
I shall descend so low as to report
Thy paper business.[1]
Arm. I beg, proud Don?
I scorn to scribble: my petition
Is written on my bosom in red wounds.
Coc. I am no surgeon, sir: alloone.[2]
Arm. Base hounds!
Thou god of gay apparel, what strange looks
May suit to do thee service? Mercers' books
Show men's devotions to thee: hell cannot hold
A fiend more stately. My acquaintance sold
'Cause poor? Stood now my beaten tailor by me
Plaiting of my rich hose, my silk-man nigh me
Drawing upon my lordship's courtly calf
Pairs of embroidered stockings; or but half

[1] Mr. Bullen quotes the following apposite lines from Massinger's *Great Duke of Florence*, Act III. sc. i.

> *Gior.* Do you not know me?
> *Cal.* I tell thee, no: on forfeit of my place
> I must not know myself, much less my father,
> But by petition: that petition time too
> With golden birds that sing to the tune of profit,
> Or I am deaf.

[2] Begone.

A dozen things called creditors ; had my barber
Perfumed my lousy thatch (this nitty[1] harbour),
—These pied-winged butterflies would know me then,
But they ne'er landed in the Isle of Man,
That such a thing as this, a decoy fly,
Should buzz about the ear of royalty !
Such whale-boned-bodied[2] rascals, that owe more
To linen-drapers, to new vamp a whore,
Than all their race from their grand beldame forth[3]
To this their reign in clothes were ever worth
—That such should tickle a commander's ear
With flattery, when we must not come near
But stand (for want of clothes), tho' we win towns,
Amongst almsbasket men ! Such silken clowns,
When we with blood deserve, share our reward—
We held scarce fellow-mates to the black guard.[4]
Why should a soldier, being the world's right arm,
Be cut off by the left? Infernal charm !
Is the world all ruff and feather? is desert
Bastard? doth custom cut off his child's part?[5]
No difference 'twixt a wild-goose and a swan,
A tailor and a true-born gentleman?
So the world thinks, but search the herald's notes,
And you shall find much difference in their coats.

Pro. A field bee speak with me? Bold Armiger,
Welcome ! thy bosom is a register
Of thy bold acts: virtue's still poor, I see.

Arm. Poor? rich.

Pro. In scars.

Arm. In wealth, in honesty.
Since I first read my A B C of war

[1] Filthy, from nit, or louse.
[2] Men wearing the then fashionable whalebone doublets.
[3] MS. From their great grannam forth.
[4] Originally a jocular name given to the lowest menials of the Court, the carriers of coals and wood, &c., who all followed the Court in its progress, and thus became observed.—*Nares.*
[5] *i.e.* A child's portion.

In nine set fields I sailed by that bright star ·
Ere I was truncheon high I had the style
Of beardless captain ; and I all this while
Drilled under honesty, never pursed dead pay,
Never made week the longer by a day,—
A soldier dead, his pay did likewise die ;
And still I served one general, honesty.
From his own trencher I was daily fed
With cannon bullets, taught to chew steel and lead,
Nay, digest iron ; and whene'er I die
I'll have no epitaph but honesty
Writ over me.[1]

Pro. I know it, thou black swan.
I have seen this bee (in his fate more than man)
Write in the field such stories with his sting
That our best leaders, reading o'er his writing,
Swore 'twas a new philosophy of fighting,
His acts were so remarkable. In one field
Fought 'gainst the surly wasp (I needs must yield
Desert his due), having bruised my filmy wing
And in fierce combat blunted my keen sting,
Beaten into a tuft of rosemary,
This manly bee, armed with true honesty,
Three times that day redeemed me, and bestrid
My body with colossus thigh—

Arm. I did.[2]

[1] The preceding lines read in MS. :—

Was still called captain, mews were all my grace,
Another pursed the profit of my place ;
Whilst from his trencher I was daily fed
With cannon bullets, taught to chew steel and lead,
Nay, digest iron ; yet still to close the feast
I fed on title, captain was the least,
Coarsest court-cake bread, but the history
Proves it too dainty and too fine for me :
I'm honest still though, and whene'er I die, &c.

[2] This is the reading of the MS., adopted by Mr. Bullen in preference to that of the quarto, which gives the speech to Prorex, reading "He did."

Pro. Whilst all the thunder-bolts that war could throw
At me, fell on his head.[1] He cannot now
Choose but be honest still, and valiant: still
His hive with wax and honeycombs I'll fill,
And, in reward of thy bold chivalry,
Make thee commander of a colony,
Wishing all such as honour discipline
To serve him, and make honesty their shrine.[2]

CHARACTER V.[3]

POETASTER, the POETICAL BEE.

Here invention aims his drift
At poet's wants and patron's thrift;
Servile scorn and ignorant pride
Free judgment slightly doth deride.

[1] MS. *Arm.* Then you did vow
And swear to make me captain; then these bees
Gave me applauses round about my knees
Crying my worth up.
Pro. So they shall do; still
Thy hive, &c.

[2] These two lines are absent in the MS., which ends:—
Arm. I ask no more; see your reward be dealt
Fairly, for fear my just revenge be felt.

[3] A passage from Mr. Bullen's Introduction to his edition of Day will be of service to the reader in this scene. "In Character 5, as given by the 4to, the author's drift is difficult to divine. For a moment the reader is at a loss to see why the additional lines (see note, p. 237), preserved by the MS. and required to make the sense complete, were cancelled in the revised copy. It will be observed that Stuprata of the MS. answers both to Iltriste and Arethusa of the 4to. There is an unpleasant suggestiveness in the name 'Stuprata;' and it would seem that Day had intended at first to represent her as won over

Speakers:[1] GNATHO, ILTRISTE, POETASTER.



ILT. A scholar speak with me?
Gna. He says a poet.
I think no less, for his apparel shows it;
He's of some standing, his cloth cloak is worn
To a serge.
Ilt. He's poor: that proves his high things scorn
Mundane felicity, disdains to flatter

from her lover's side by the solicitations of the Master Bee. So we should gather from the table of arguments in the MS. :—

'Stuprata by a willing force,
Having endured a wished divorce,
Repents,' &c.

The continual references in the MS. to her 'sin' and 'shame' would be otherwise inexplicable. Her own account, as given by the MS., conflicts with this view; but we could hardly expect her to expose her shame to a stranger. On a revision of the work, Day rightly saw that the least hint of Stuprata's infidelity would have tainted throughout the clear current of the poem. He therefore determined to change the unfortunate name, and to let Character 5 stand unconnected with Characters 6 and 8. Of course the author cannot be acquitted of carelessness for leaving Character 5 in so unfinished a state; but how great has been the gain in the two later characters! Arethusa's abandonment of her lover is now nothing more than a piece of passing petulance; the fair fame of the pretty bee is untainted, and the whole of the ugly business is resolved into a lover's quarrel."

[1] The speakers in the MS. are Stuprata, Servant, Poetaster. The scene opens :—

Stupr. A scholar speak with me? Admit him do it,
I have business for him.
Serv. Business? he's a poet,
A common beadle, one that lashes crimes,
Whips one abuse and fetches blood o' the times.
Yet [? ye'll] welcome him?
Stupr. Yes, him, dull ignorance!
Serv. With Jack Drum's entertainment; he shall dance
The jig called "Beggar's Bush."
Stupr. Peace, let thy sin
Perish at home: out, spaniel, fetch him in.
Serv. He's come, &c.

"Jack Drum's entertainment" was a proverbial expression, of unknown origin, for ill-treatment; "Beggar's Bush," another proverbial saying, was one of those which depended on a punning allusion to the name of a place. It means to go on the road to ruin.

For empty air, or, like crow poets, chatter
For great men's crumbs. But what's his suit to me?
Gna. To beg a dinner: old Dame Charity,
Lame of all four, limps out, and sounds a call
For all the rogues.
Ilt. Out, senseless animal!
Hearing of my retirement and the hate
I bear to court attendance and high state,
He's come perhaps to write my epitaph.
Gna. Some lousy ballad! I cannot choose but laugh
At these poor squitter-pulps.
Ilt. Thou ignorant elf,
Should he know this he'd make thee hang thyself
In strong iambics.
Gna. What's that, hemp or flax?
Ilt. A halter stretch thee: such ill-tutored jacks
Poison the fame of patrons: I shall, I doubt me,
Be thought Job's wife, I keep such scabs about me.
Seal up thy lips, and if you needs must sin,
Do't privately: out, spaniel, bring him in.
Gna. He's come.
Poet. To you my love presents this book.
Ilt. I am unworthy on't, except a hook
Hang at each line to choke me. Stay, what name
Hast given thy brat? To the most honoured dame.[1]
Com'st lying into the world? be thy leaves torn,
Rent and used basely, as thy title's borne.
Gna. Rare sport! no marvel if this poet begs
For his lame verses, they've nor feet nor legs.
Poet. Nor thou humanity.
Ilt. Go burn this paper sprite.
Gna. Sir, your dark poetry will come to light.

[1] MS. continues:—
Most honoured dame? dishonoured hadst thou said
I would have been thy patron, hugged and read:
Honoured? away, go burn't, out of my sight.
Ser. Sir, your dark poetry, &c.

Poet. You are not noble thus to wound the heart,
Tear and make martyrs of the limbs of art,
Before examination. Cæsar taught
No such court doctrine; Alexander thought
Better of Homer's lofty Iliads
And hugged their master. Tho' illiterate jades
And spur-galled hackneys[1] kick at their betters, though
Some hide-bound worldlings neither give nor show
Countenance to poets, yet the noble spirit
Loves virtue for its own sake, and rewards merit
Tho' ne'er so meanly habited. No[2] bee
That frequents Hibla takes more pains than we
Do in our canzons; yet they live and thrive
Richly, when we want wax to store our hive.

Ilt. I honour poesie, nor dislike I thee;
Only thy fawning title troubled me.
I love your groves, and in your libraries,
Amongst quaint odes and passionate elegies,
Have read whole volumes of much-injured dames
Righted by poets. Assume thy brightest flames
And dip thy pen in wormwood juice for me.
Canst write a satire? Tart authority
Do call 'em libels: canst write such a one?

Poet. I can mix ink and copperas.

Ilt. So; go on.

Poet. Dare mingle poison with 'em.

Ilt. Do't for me;
Thou hast the theory?

Poet. Yes: each line must be
A cord to draw blood.

Ilt. Good.

Poet. A lie to dare
The stab from him it touches.

Ilt. Better, rare.

[1] I have adopted Mr. Bullen's suggested reading, a combination of MS. and quarto.

[2] So the MS.; the quarto has "nor."

Poet. Such satires, as you call 'em, must lance wide
The wounds of men's corruptions; ope the side
Of vice; search deep for dead flesh and rank cores.
A poet's ink can better cure some sores
Than surgeon's balsam.

Ilt. Undertake this cure,
I'll crown thy pains with gold.

Poet. I'll do't, be sure;
But I must have the party's character.

Ilt. The Master Bee.

Poet. That thunder doth deter
And fright my muse: I will not wade in ills
Beyond my depth, nor dare I pluck the quills,
Of which I make pens, out of the eagle's claw
Know, I am a loyal subject. [1]

Ilt. A jack-daw.
This baseness follows your profession:
You are like common beadles, easily won
To whip poor bees to death, scarce worth the striking.
But fawn with slavish flattery and throw liking
On great drone's vices; you clap hands at those,
Which proves your vices friends and virtues foes;
Where the true poet indeed doth scorn to gild
A coward's tomb with glories, or to build
A sumptuous pyramid of golden verse

[1] MS. contains the following lines not in the quarto:—
For know I am ever loyal; but the cause
Of your distaste?
Stu. This; in my prime of youth,
When modest love and uncorrupted truth
Were my companions, I engaged my heart
To a bee enriched with valour and desert
Who loved me dearly. But our Master Bee
('Tis pity great ones should love flattery)
Wrought by a favourite, divorced our hearts,
Neglects my tears, tramples on his deserts,—
For this I hate him: touch him for this and spare not;
I'll be thy warrant.
Poet. Pardon me: I dare not.
Stu. Why here's the shame of your profession:
You are like common beadles, &c.

Over the ruins of an ignoble hearse.
His lines like his invention are born free,
And both live blameless to eternity:
He holds his reputation so dear
As neither flattering hope nor servile fear
Can bribe his pen to temporize with kings;
The blacker are their crimes, he louder sings.[1]
Go, go, thou dar'st not, canst not write; let me
Invoke the help of sacred poesie.
May not a woman be a poet?
Poet. Yes;
And learn the art with far more easiness
Than any man can do; for poesie
Is but a feigning, feigning is to lie,
And women study that art more than men.
Ilt. I am not fit to be a poet then,
For I should leave off feigning and speak true.
Poet. You'll ne'er then make good poet.
Ilt. Very few
I think be good.
Poet. I think so too.
Ilt. Be plain.
How might I do to hit the master vein
Of poesie?
Poet. I descend from Persius.[2]
He taught his pupils to breed poets thus:
To have their temples girt and swaddled up
With night-caps; to steal juice from Hebe's cup
To steep their barren crowns in; pilfer clouds
From off Parnassus' top; to build them shrouds
Of laurel boughs to keep invention green,
Then drink nine healths of sacred Hippocrene
To the nine Muses. This, says Persius,

[1] The reading of the MS. adopted by Mr. Bullen. The quarto reads:—

The blacker are his crimes, the ouder sings.

[2] The lines that follow bear no resemblance to anything in Persius.—*Bullen.*

Will make a poet: I think cheaper thus,—
Gold, music, wine, tobacco and good cheer
Make poets soar aloft and sing out clear.
Ilt. Are you born poets?
Poet. Yes.
Ilt. So die?
Poet. Die never.
Ilt. My misery's then a poet that lives ever;
For time has lent it such eternity
And full succession, it can never die.
How many sorts of poets are there?
Poet. Two;
Great and small poets.
Ilt. Great and small ones? So;
Which do you call the great? the fat ones?
Poet. No;
But such as have great heads, which emptied forth
Fill all the world with wonder at their worth:
Proud flies, swoln big with breath and windy praise,
Yet merit brakes, and nettles 'stead of bays.
Such title cods and lobsters of Art's sea;
The small ones call the shrimps of poesie.
The greater number of spawn-feathered bees
Fly low like kites, the other mount on trees;
Those peck up dunghill garbage, these drink wine
Out of Jove's cup; those mortal, these divine.
Ilt. Who is the best poet?
Poet. Emulation;
The next, necessity; but detraction
The worst of all.
Ilt. Imagine I were one:
What should I get by't?
Poet. Why, opinion.
Ilt. I've too much of that already; for 'tis known
That in opinion I am overthrown.
Opinion is my evidence, judge and jury;
Opinion has betrayed me to the fury

Of vulgar scandal; partial opinion
Gapes like a sheriff for execution.
I wondered still how scholars came undone,
And now I see 'tis by opinion,
That foe to worth, sworn enemy to art,
Patron of ignorance, hangman of desert.
Ask any man what can betray a poet
To scandal? Base opinion shall do it.
I'll therefore be no poet, no, nor make
Ten Muses of your nine. My reason take:
Verses, though freemen born, are bought and sold
Like slaves; their makers too, that merit gold,
Are fed with shales.[1] Whence grows this slight regard?
From hence: Opinion gives their reward.

CHARACTER VI.

THE RIVALS.

Invention labours to discover
The pretty passions of a lover;
Showing how in amorous fits
Long lost a bee may find her wits.

Speakers: ARETHUSA, ULANIA.



ARE. Well met, fair beauty; pray you can you tell
News of Meletus?
Ula. Such a bee doth dwell [friend?
In my father's hive; but ask you as a

[1] Husks.

Are. Yes; and as one who for his good would spend
Living and life.
Ula. Yet not so much as I.
Are. Why! do you love him?[1]
Ula. I'm mine own echo, ay.
Are. Wherefore?
Ula. I know not; there's some fallacy.
For not a village fly nor meadow bee,
That traffics daily on the neighbour plain,
But will report how all the wingèd train
Have sued to me for love. When we have flown
In swarms out to discover fields new blown,
Happy was he could find the forward'st tree
And cull the choicest blossoms out for me;
Of all their labours they allowed me some
And, like my champions, manned me out and home:
Yet I loved none of them. Philon, a bee
Well skilled in verse and amorous poesie,
As we have sat at work, both of one rose,

[1] MS. *Stupr.* Ay me, a rival! wherefore do you love him?
Riv. 'Cause in love's sphere there's no star shines above him:
He is Cupid's altar, and before him lies
Ten thousand bleeding hearts as sacrifice.
There's a mild majesty throned in his brows;
At each hair of his head a Cupid grows
Whose little fingers (curling golden wire)
Make amorous nets to entangle chaste desire;
A pair of suns move in his sphere-like eyes:
Were I love's pirate, he should be my prize.
Only his person lightens all the room,
For where his beauty shines, night dares not come;
His frown would school a tyrant to be meek;
Love's chronicle is painted on his cheek,
Where lilies and fresh roses spread so high
As death himself to see them fade would die.
Stupr. For this you love him?
Riv. For all this I do,
Yet 'tis a wonder that I should do so,
Except induced by some strange fallacy,
For neither upland fly nor meadow bee
That traffic daily on this flowery plain, &c.

Has hummed sweet canzons both in verse and prose,
Which I ne'er minded. Astrophel, a bee
(Although not so poetical as he)
Yet in his full invention quick and ripe,
In summer evenings on his well-tuned pipe,
Upon a woodbine blossom in the sun
(Our hive being clean swept and our day's work done)
Would play me twenty several tunes; yet I
Nor minded Astrophel nor his melody.
Then there's Aminter,[1] for whose love fair Lede
(That pretty bee) flies up and down the mead
With rivers in her eyes, without deserving
Sent me trim acorn cups,[2] of his own carving,
To drink May dew and mead in. Yet none of these,
My hive-born playfellows and neighbour bees,
Could I affect, until this strange bee came;
And him I love with such an ardent flame
Discretion cannot quench.

Are. Alas, good heart!
What pains she has ta'en to study o'er my part.[3]
How doth he spend his time?

Ula. Labours and toils,
Extracts more honey out of barren soils
Than twenty lazy drones. I have heard my father,
Steward of the hive, profess that he had rather
Lose half the swarm than him. If a bee poor or weak
Grow faint on's way, or by misfortune break
A wing or leg against a twig; alive
Or dead he'll bring into the master's hive

[1] Reading of the MS.; the quarto has "Amniter."

[2] MS. reading, adopted by Mr. Bullen; the quarto has "trim acorn boughs."

[3] So in MS. The quarto reads:—Now I begin
To love him, fresh examples ushers sin.
Mr. Bullen rightly says the reading of the MS. is far preferable; but he does not adopt it.

Him and his burthen. But the other day,
On the next plain there grew a mortal fray
Betwixt the wasps and us; the wind grew high,
And a rough storm raged so impetuously
Our bees could scarce keep wing; then fell such rain,
It made our colony forsake the plain
And fly to garrison: yet still he stood,
And 'gainst the whole swarm made his party good,[1]
And at each blow he gave, cried out "his vow,
His vow and Arethusa." On each bough
And tender blossom he engraves her name
With his sharp sting: to Arethusa's fame
He consecrates his actions; all his worth
Is only spent to character her forth.
On damask roses and the leaves of pines
I have seen him write such amorous moving lines
In Arethusa's praise, as my poor heart
Has, when I read them, envied her desert;
And wept and sighed to think that he should be
To her so constant, yet not pity me.[2]

[1] MS. adds :—And backed by a few stragglers home he drives
The adverse colony into their hives,
And had not our arch-colonel by commands
Sheathed up his sword and manacled his hands,
He had seized both wax and honey, and set fire
Of all their beeskeps; forced thus to retire,
He bounds his proud steed, and cries, "This I've done
In honour of Stuprata, she's alone
The *primum vivens* of my actions!" on each bough
And tender rind he registers his vow
Made to that fair, though false one, all his wealth, &c.

[2] Instead of the ensuing lines, MS. reads :—
Stupr. What have I heard? Relictus, pardon me,
For I have been by much too cruel to thee.
Yet if, as she reports, I find thy heart
A second time contract, for thy desert
Nature shall work a miracle so strange
As all the groves shall wonder at my change.
And though we ne'er see more, yet for thy sake
And mine own sin, this solemn vow I make:
Never to love bee more, never to fly
To summer bower; the blossomed bravery

Are. Oh!
Ula. Wherefore sigh you?
Are. Amorato, oh!
My marble heart melts.
Ula. What, sigh and weep you too?
Are. Yes, in mere pity that your churlish fate
Should for true love make you unfortunate.
Ula. I thank you. What this Arethusa is
I do not know: only my suit is this,—
If you do know this bee, when you next meet him
(He's labouring in that mead), in my name greet him,
And tell him that I love him more, far more
Than Arethusa can; nay I adore
His memory so, that he shall be my saint;
And when his tender limbs grow weak and faint,
I'll do his labour and mine own. The spring,
Being dry, grows much unfit for labouring:
To prevent famine and a sudden dearth,
For his sake I'll befriend the barren earth
And make it fruitful with a shower of tears,
In which I'll drown his scorn and mine own fears.
Are. What have I heard? Amorato, pardon me,
For I have been by much too cruel to thee;
Yet if, as she reports, I find thy heart
Bequeathed to Arethusa's weak desert,
Nature shall work a miracle so strange,
All amorous bees shall wonder at my change.

O' the court shall never tempt me; to the bare
And lawless commons I'll for food repair,
Where 'stead of rosebuds and blown eglantine
'Mongst burrs and thistles I'll consume and pine.
I'll seek him out—he's mourning in the grove—
And either lose my life or win his love.

CHARACTER VII.

PARSIMONIOUS, the GATHERING BEE.

The thrifty bee doth tauntingly deride
The prodigal, invcighing 'gainst his pride.

Speakers: PARSIMONIOUS, ACOLASTES.



AR. Thou art my kinsman; yet, had not thy mother
Been constant to thy father and none other,
I would have sworn some emperor had got thee.

Aco. Why so he might; let not opinion sot thee.

Par. Suppose all kingdoms in the world were balls,
And thou[1] stood with a racket twixt four walls
To toss *ad placitum:* how wouldst thou play?

Aco. Why, as with balls, bandy[2] 'em all away;
They gone, play twice as many of the score.

Par. A tennis-court of kings could do no more;
But, faith, what dost thou think that I now think
Of thy this day's expenses?

Aco. How? in drink,
Dice, drabs and music? why, that it was brave?

Par. No; that thou art a proud vain-glorious knave.
That teeming womb thy father left so

[1] "Thou" omitted in quarto.
[2] Bandy, originally a term at tennis, from French *bander*.—*Nares.*

Of golden issue, thou, like a brainless gull,
Hast viper-like eat through. Oh here's trim stuff,
A good man's 'state in garters, rose, and ruff!
Aco. How! one man's 'state? that beggar's wretched poor
That wears but one man's portion: I'll do more.
Had I my will, betwixt my knee and toe
I'd hang more pearls and diamonds than grow
In both the Indies. Poor Fucus, must my hose
Match your old greasy cod-piece?
Par. Let's not part foes:
I'd have thee live in compass.
Aco. Fool, I'll be
Like Phœbus in the zodiac, I am he
That would take Phaeton's fall, tho' I set fire
On the whole world, to be Heaven's charioteer.
Par. Thou'st fired too much already; parks and chases
Have no part left of 'em, save names of places.
Thou'st burnt so much, thou'st not one tree to feil
To make a fire to warm thee by in hell.
Aco. I'll warm me by thy bones then.
Par. Stay[1] and hold;
Want fire till then thy lust will starve with cold:
'Tis voiced abroad, too, that thy lands are sold.
Aco. They are: what then?
Par. And that the money went
Towards the[2] great last proud entertainment.
Aco. It's a lie.
Par. I thank you.
Aco. But suppose it true
That I spent millions, what's all that to you?
Had I for every day i' the year a friend,
For each hour in that year a mine to spend,
I'd waste both Indies, but I'd feast them all.

[1] Quarto, "Say."
[2] "The" inserted by Mr. Bullen.

Par. And starve thyself, still a true prodigal:
What should thy stews have then?
Aco. Out, lazy drone;
Thou enviest bees with stings, 'cause thine is gone.
Plate, jewels, treasure, all shall fly.
Par. They shall;
And then some dunghill give thee burial.
Aco. No, I'll turn pickled thief.
Par. What's that?
Aco. A pirate.[1]
If gold keep house, a-sea or land, I'll hate.
As to feed riot I the land did brave,
So, scorning land, water shall be my grave.
Meanwhile the circle I've begun I'll run,
(Should the devil stand 'i the centre) like the sun,
In his meridian; my ascent's divine.
The vanity of all mankind is mine.[2]
In me all prodigals' looseness fresh shall flow;
Borrow and spend, ne'er look back what I owe:
Wine, harlots, surfeits, rich embroidered clothes,
Strange fashions, all sins sensual, new coined oaths.
Shall feed and fill me: I'll feast every sense:
Naught shall become me ill, but innocence.
Par. Farewell; I spy a wallet at thy back:
Who spends all young, ere age comes, all shall lack.

[1] So in MS., substituted by Mr. Bullen for the quarto's "pitcate."
[2] MS. adds:—
Frequent all objects, opportunities,
Court bad occasion, haunt lewd companies.



CHARACTER VIII.

INAMORATO, the PASSIONATE BEE.

In this the poet spends some art
To character a lover's heart:
And, for a sigh his love let fall,
Prepares a solemn funeral.

Speakers:[1] CHARIOLUS, ARETHUSA.

CHA. Oh, Arethusa, cause of my soul's moving,
Nature, save thee, hath no work worth the loving;
For, when she fashioned thee, she summoned all
The Graces and the Virtues cardinal;
Nay, the whole swarm of bees came loaden home,
Each bringing thee a rich perfection;
And laid them up with such art in the hive
(Thy brain) as, since that, all thy beauties thrive:
For being mixt at thy creation,
They made thee fair past art or imitation.

Are. 'Tis he:—is not your name Chariolus,
Son to our Master Bee?

Cha. What art that thus
Bluntly salut'st me?

Are. One that has to say
Somewhat to you from lovely Arethusa.

[1] In the MS. the speakers are Relictus, Stuprata, as in Ch. VI.

Cha. How doth she?
Are. Well.
Cha. Ill-tutored bee, but well?
The word's too sparing for her: more than well,
Nay, more than excellent's an epithet
Too poor for Arethusa.
Are. This is right
As the bee told me.—Can she be better well[1]
Than with the Gods?
Cha. The Gods?
Are. A passing bell
Proclaimed her death, and the whole swarm of bees
Mourned at her hearse in sable liveries.
Long she lay sick, yet would not send till death
Knocked at life's gate to fetch away her breath;
But just as he came in, Go thou (quoth she)
Seek out Chariolus; greet him from me,
And pray him that he would no longer shroud
His fair illustrate splendour in a cloud;
For I am gone from the world's vanities
Unto the Gods, a pleasing sacrifice:[2]
Yet there I'll wish him well, and say, Good youth,
I bequeath nothing to him but my truth.
And even as death arrested her, she cried,
Oh my Chariolus!—so with a sigh she died.[3]

[1] MS. but I'll try him nearer:
The truer that I find his breast, the dearer
Shall my sin cost me: can she be better well, &c.
The quarto omits "be" before "better."

[2] MS.—For I, quoth she, affrighted at my shame,
My injury done to honour and your name,
Foes with my fault and the world's vanities,
Go to the Gods a smiling sacrifice.

[3] MS.—I bequeathe to him my once perfect truth
Freed from incumbrance; that word spoke, she cried,
Pardon my sin, Relictus, sighed and died.
Rel. Her sin? her innocence, she was divine
And could not err, the sin was only mine,
And my unworthiness; and yet since mortal, why
Might she not sin, as well as sigh or die?
For with a sigh she died, &c.

Cha. So, with a sigh, she died.
Are. What mean you, sir?
—I have told him, like a foolish messenger,
What I shall first repent.
Cha. Come, let us divide
Sorrows and tears; for, with a sigh, she died.
Are. Nay then; she lives.
Cha. 'Tis false; believe it not.
I'll have that sigh drawn on a chariot
(Made of the bones of lovers who have cried,
Beaten their breasts, sighed for their loves and died)
Covered with azure-coloured velvet, where
The sun of her affections shall shine clear.
In careless manner, 'bout the canopy,
Upon the blue, in quaint embroidery,
Arethusa and Chariolus shall stand
As newly married, joinèd hand in hand.[1]
The chariot shall be drawn by milk-white swans,
About whose comely necks (as straight as wands),
Instead of reins, there shall hang chains of pearl
As precious as her faith was. The prime girl
That shall attend this chariot shall be Truth,
Who, in a robe composed of ruined youth,
Shall follow weeping, hanging down the head,
As who should say, My sweet companion's dead.
Next shall the Graces march, clad in rich sables
With correspondent hoods, 'bout which large cables[2]
Of pearl and gold, in rich embroidery,
Shall hang sad mottoes of my misery.[3]
Are. Oh no; my misery!
Cha. Next these shall go
All Arethusa's virtues in a row:
Her wisdom first, in plain habiliments,

[1] MS. adds:—If any ask how divorced love came tied,
Tell 'em she wept, sighed for her sins and died.
[2] The quarto has "Tables." [tied,
[3] MS. adds:—About their waists (MS., masts) gold girdles shall be
The studs of pearl she sinned, wept, sighed and died.

As not affecting gaudy ornaments;
Next them her chastity, attired in white,[1]
(Whose chaste eye shall her epitaph indite)
Looking as if it meant to check desire
And quell the ascension of the Paphian fire;
Next these, her beauty, that immortal thing,
Decked in a robe that signifies the spring,
The loveliest season of the quartered year;
Last shall her virgin modesty appear,
And that a robe, nor white nor red, shall wear,
But equally participating both;
Call it a maiden blush, and so the cloth
Shall be her hieroglyphic; on her eye
Shall sit discretion who, when any spy
Would at that casement (like a thief) steal in,
Shall, like her heart's true porters, keep out sin.[2]
These shall be all chief mourners; and, because
This sigh killed Arethusa, here we'll pause
And drop a tear, the tribute of her love.
Next this, because a sigh did kill my dove
(A good conceit, I pray forget it not),
At the four corners of this chariot
I'll have the four winds statued, which shall blow
And sigh my sorrows out, above, below,
Into each quarter. Then, sir, on the top,
Over all these gaudy trim things, I'll set up
My statue[3] in jet; my posture this—
Catching at Arethusa, my lost bliss:
For over me, by geometric pins,
I'll have her hang betwixt two cherubins,

[1] MS.—Next these her chastity, how tired? in black,
And 'twill show well, for having 'scaped a wrack,
To mourn will show her soul conceives a pride
That tears washed out her fault before she died.

[2] MS. adds:—For should it enter in immodesty,
There is no cure for sin but sigh and die.

[3] This should no doubt read "statua," and be pronounced, as the metre demands, in three syllables.

As if they had snatched her up from me and earth,
In heaven to give her a more glorious birth;
The word this:—What should virtue do on earth?
This I'll have done; and when 'tis finished, all
That love, come to my poor sigh's funeral.
Swell gall, break heart, flow tears like a full tide,
For, with a sigh, fair Arethusa died.

Are. Rather than thus, your faithful flames should smother:
Forget her thought, and entertain another.

Cha. Oh, never, never! with the turtle-dove,
A sigh shall bear my soul up to my love.

CHARACTER IX.

PHARMACOPOLIS, the QUACKSALVING BEE.

This satire is the character
Of an imposterous quacksalver;
Who, to steal practise and to vent
His drugs, would buy a patient.

Speakers: SENILIS, STEWARD, PHARMACOPOLIS.



SEN. What's he?

Stew. The party.

Sen. How? what party, sir?

Stew. A most sweet rogue, an honest quacksalver;
That sues to be your household pothecary.

Sen. What sees he in my face, that I should buy. . . .

His drugs and drenches? My cheek wears a colour
As fresh as his, and my veins' channel's fuller
Of crimson blood, than his; my well-knit joints
Are all trussed round, and need no physical points.
Read the whole alphabet of all my age,
'Mongst sixty letters shall not find one ache[1]:
My blood's not boiled with fevers, nor, though old
Is't icicled with cramps, or dropsy cold:
I am healthful both in body and in wits;
Coughs, rheums, catarrhs, gouts, apopletic fits,
The common sores of age, on me ne'er ran.
Nor Galenist, nor Paracelsian
Shall ere read physic lecture out of me:
I'll be no subject for anatomy.

Phar. They are two good artists, sir.

Sen. All that I know:
What the Creator did, they in part do:
A true physician's a man-maker too.
My kitchen is my doctor; and my garden,
My college, master, chief assistant, warden
And pothecary. When they give me pills,
They work so gently I'm not choked with bills:
Ounce, drachma, dram—the mildest of all these
Is a far stronger grief than the disease.

Phar. Were't not for bills, physicians might go make Mustard.

Sen. I know't; nor bills nor pills I'll take.
I stand on sickness' shore, and see men tossed
From one disease to another, at last quite lost;
But on that sea of surfeits where they are drowned
I, never hoisting sail, am ever found.

Phar. How! ever found? were all our gallants so,
Doctors and pothecaries might go sow
Dowlas[2] for saffron-bags, take leave of silk

[1] This is of course, a pun, "ache" being formerly pronounced precisely like the letter "h."

[2] Coarse linen cloth.

And eat green chibbals[1] and sour butter-milk.
Would you know how all physic to confound?
Why, 'tis done thus,—keep but your gallants sound.
Sen. 'Tis their own faults, if they, 'fore springs or falls,
Emptying wine-glasses fill up urinals.
Man was made sound at first: if he grows ill,
'Tis not by course of nature, but free will.
Distempers are not ours; there should be then,
Were we ourselves, no physic: men to men
Are both diseases' cause and the disease.
Thank Fate, I'm sound and free from both of these.
Phar. Steward, my fifty crowns; *Redde.*
Stew. Not I.
Phar. I'll give you then a glister.
Stew. Me, sir? Why?
Phar. I'll tell your master. — Sir, tho' you'll take none,
Let me give your steward a purgation.
Stew. Why! I am well.
Phar. No; you are too hard bound,
And you must cast me up the fifty pound
I gave you in bribe-powder.
Stew. Be patient.[2]
Phar. You'll practise on me then.
Sen. If this be true,
My health I see, is bought and sold by you.[3]

[1] Onions.

[2] In the MS. the words "patient, ... then" have been erased and the rhyme has been restored thus:—

Stew. Pray be content
For fifty more I'll sell you a patient
Far better than my lord.

[3] The MS. reads from here:—

Who buys me next, a doctor, he in potions
Drinks me off to a surgeon, who in lotions,
Barley-broth mash and diets physical,
Prepares my body for an hospital;
Where gammer matron for a treble fee,
Swears by'r death's-head she'll make as much of me.

A doctor buys me next, whose mess of potions
Striking me full of ulcers, oils and lotions
Bequeath me to a surgeon ; last of all
He gives me diet in an hospital :
Then comes the scrivener, and he draws my will ;
Thus slaves, for gold, their masters sell and kill,
—Nay, nay ; so got, so keep it ; for thy fifty
Take here a hundred ; we'll not now be thrifty.
But of such artless empirics I'll beware,
And learn both when to spend and when to spare.



CHARACTER X.

FENERATOR, the USURING BEE.

In which the poet lineates forth
That bounty feeds desert and worth :
Checks counterfeits, inveighs 'gainst bribes,
And Fenerator's nest describes.

(Meaning of what I have) as ever mother
Did of her child : slid thus from one another
Like to a piece at shovel board, by mine own
Having lost the game, into the box I am thrown,
My grave, a house where I must ever dwell.
Thus slaves for gold their masters buy and sell,
But of such knaves and empirics I'll beware,
And learn both when to spend and when to spare.

Following Mr. Bullen's suggestion, I have restored what is evidently the proper reading to lines five and six from the end, distorted in the MS. transcript.

Speakers: DICASTES, SERVITOR, FENERATOR, IMPOTENS.



DIC. What rings this bell so loud for?

Ser. Suitors, great bee,
Call for despatch of business.

Dic. Say what they be.

Ser. Wracked fen-bees, aged, lame, and such as gasp
Under late bondage of the cruel wasp.

Dic. Cheer them with hearty welcomes; in my chair
Seat the bee most in years, let no one dare
To send 'em sad hence, will[1] our janitors
Observe them nobly; for the mariners
Are clocks of danger, and do ne'er stand still,
But move from one unto another ill:
Their dial's hand still points to the line of death,
And, though they have wind at will, they oft lose breath.
Of all our bees that labour in the mead
I love them, for they earn the dearest bread
That life can buy; when the elements make war
To ruin all, they're saved by their good star:
And, for the galley-slaves, oh love that bee
Who suffers only for pure constancy.
—What suitor's that?

Fen. A very sorry one.

Dic. What makes thee sorry?

Fen. Pale affliction:
My hive is burnt.

Dic. And why to me dost come?

Fen. To beg a hundred pound.

Dic. Give him the sum.[2]

Fen. Now the gods—

Dic. Nay, nay; kneel not, nor be mistook.
Faces are speaking pictures: thine's a book,

[1] *i.e.* Bid.

[2] MS.—*Fen.* To beg some wax and honey.
Dic. Give him some.

Which, if the proof be truly printed, shows,
A page of close dissembling.
Fen. High Heaven knows—
Dic. Nay, though thou be'st one, yet the money's thine ;
Which I bestow on charity, not her shrine.
If thou cheat'st me, thou art cheated ; and hast got
(Being liquorish) poison from my gallipot
Instead of honey. Thou art not my debtor :
I'm ne'er the worse, nor thou (I fear) much better.
Who's next ?
Ser. A one-legged bee.
Dic. O use him well.
Imp. Cannons defend me ! Gunpowder of hell !
Whom hast thou blown up here ?
Dic. Dost know him, friend ?
Imp. Yes, for the kingdom's pestilence, a fiend :
A moth, takes up all petticoats he meets ;
Eats feather-beds, bolsters, pillows, blankets, sheets ;
And with sale bills lays shirts and smocks a-bed
In linen, close adultery ; and, instead
Of clothes, strews lavender so strongly on 'em
The owners never more can smell upon 'em.
This bee sucks honey from the blooms of sin :
Be't ne'er so rank or foul, he crams it in.
Most of the timber that his state repairs
He hews out o' the bones of foundered players :
They feed on poets' brains, he eats their breath.
Dic. Most strange conception—life begot in death !
Imp. He's a male polecat ; a mere heart-blood soaker :
'Mongst bees the hornet, but with men a broker.
Dic. Well charactered : what scathe hath he done thee ?
Imp. More than my leg's loss : in one month ate three
Of my poor fry, besides my wife : this Jew,
Though he will eat no pork, eats bees, 'tis true.
Dic. He told me, when I asked him why he mourned,
His hive, and all he could call his, was burned.
Imp. He's burned himself, perhaps, but that's no news ;

For he both keeps and is maintained by the stews.
He buys their sins, and they pay him large rents
For a long lane of lousy tenements,
Built up (instead of mortar, straw and stones)
With poor-pawn-plaster and starved debtors' bones.
He may be fired; his rotten hives are not.
To this autumn woodfare, *alias* kingdom's-rot,
I pawned my weapons, to buy coarse brown bread
To feed my fry and me. Being forfeited,
Twice so much money as he lent I gave,[1]
To have mine arms again: the griping slave
Swore not to save my soul unless I could
Lay down my stump here, my poor leg of wood,
And so hop home.

Dic. Unheard of villainy.

Ser. And is this true?[2]

Fen. I dare not say it's a lie.

Dic. And what say'st thou to this?

Imp. Nothing, but crave
Justice against this hypocritical knave,
This three-pile-velvet rascal, widows' decayer,
The poor fry's beggarer and rich bees' betrayer.
Let him have Russian law for all his sins.

Dic. What's that?

Imp. A hundred blows on his bare shins.

Fen. Come home and take thine arms.

Imp. I'll ha' thy legs:
Justice, great bee; 'tis a wronged cripple begs.

Dic. And thou shalt ha't.—I told thee, goods, ill got,
Would as ill thrive; my gift I alter not,—
That's yours. But, cunning bee, you played the knave,
To crave, not needing: this poor bee must have
His request too, else justice lose her chair.
Go; take him in, and on his shins, stript bare,
In ready payment give him a hundred strokes.

[1] MS. Twice so much wax as the churl lent I gave.
[2] So the MS.; the quarto reads, Is this true?

Imp. Hew down his shanks, as carpenters fell oaks.
Dic. Nor think me partial; for I offer thee
A hundred for a hundred.
Imp. Just his usury.[1]
Dic. A hundred pound, or else a hundred blows:
Give him the gold, he shall release you those.
Fen. Take it, and rot with't.
Imp. Follow thee thy curse.
Would blows might make all brokers thus disburse.



CHARACTER XI.

OBERON IN PROGRESSU: OBERON IN PROGRESS.

Oberon his royal progress makes
To Hybla, where he gives and takes
Presents and privileges; bees
Of worth he crowns with offices.

Speakers: OBERON, AGRICOLA, PASTORALIS, FLORA, VINTAGER.[2]



BER. The session's full: to avoid the heat,
In this cool shade each take his seat.
Agri. The wingèd tenants of these lawns,
Decked with blooms and downy pawns,
Like subjects faithful, just and true,
Bring Oberon tribute.
Ober. What are you?

[1] MS.—But Legem Talionis, use for usury.
Give him thy wax or take his hundred blows;
The greatest winners must at some times lose.
[2] "Vintager," omitted in quarto, is restored from MS.
[3] Pansies.

Agri. A poor bee that, by Oberon's will,
First invented how to till
The barren earth, and in it throw
Seeds that die before they grow;
And, being well read in nature's book,
Devised plough, sickle, scythe and hook
To weed the thistles and rank brakes
From the good corn: his voyage makes
From Thessaly, my native shrine,
And to great Oberon, all divine,
Submit myself. This wreath of wheat
(Ripened by Apollo's heat),
My bosom filled with ears of corn,
To thee that wert before time born,
I freely offer.

Ober. May thy field,
Laden with bounty, profit yield;
May the root prosper, and each ear,
Like a teeming female, bear:
April deluge and May frosts,
Lightnings and mildews fly thy coasts;
As thou in service true shalt be
To Oberon's crown and royalty.
True bailiff of our husbandry
Keep thy place still:—the next.

Past. A bee
That's keeper of king Oberon's groves,
Sheep-reeve of his flocks and droves,
His goats, his kids, his ewes and lambs,
Steers and heifers, sires and dams,
To express homage at the full,
Greets Oberon with this fleece of wool.

Ober. May thy ewes in yeaning thrive,
Stock and increase, stand and survive;
May the woodfare, cough and rot
Die or living hurt thee not:
May the wolf and wily fox

Live exiled from thy herds and flocks:
Last, not least, prosper thy grove,
And live thou blest in Oberon's love,
As thou in service true shalt be
To us and our high royalty.
—The next.

Vint. High steward of thy vines,
Taster both of grapes and wines,
In these ripe clusters that present
Full bounty, on his knees low bent,
Pays Oberon homage; and in this bowl
Brimmed with grape blood, tender toll
Of all thy vintage.

Ober. May thy grapes thrive
In autumn, and the roots survive
In churlish winter; may thy fence
Be proof 'gainst wild boars' violence;
As thou in service true shalt be
To us and our high royalty.
—A female bee: thy character?

Flo. Flora, Oberon's gardener,
(Housewife both of herbs and flowers,
To strew thy shrine and trim thy bowers
With violets, roses, eglantine,
Daffodil and blue columbine)
Hath forth the bosom of the spring
Plucked this nosegay, which I bring
From Eleusis, mine own shrine,
To thee a monarch all divine;
And, as true impost of my grove,
Present it to great Oberon's love.

Ober. Honey-dews refresh thy meads,
Cowslips spring with golden heads;
July-flowers[1] and carnations wear
Leaves double streaked with maiden-hair;
May thy lilies taller grow,

[1] A common name for flowers of the carnation kind.

Thy violets fuller sweetness owe ;
And, last of all, may Phœbus love
To kiss thee and frequent thy grove,
As thou in service true shalt be
Unto our crown and royalty.
—Keep all your places : well we know
Your loves, and will reward 'em too.
Agri. In sign that we thy words believe,
As well the birthday as the eve
We will keep holy : our winged swains
Neither for pleasure, nor for gains,
Shall dare profane't : so lead away
To solemnize this holy day.[1]



CHARACTER XII.

REXACILLIUM : The HIGH BENCH BAR.

Oberon in his Star-Chamber sits ;
Sends out subpœnas, High Court writs,
To the Master Bee ; degradeth some,
Frees others : all share legal doom.

Speakers : OBERON, FAIRIES, MASTER BEE, PROREX, VESPA, HORNET, HUMBLE BEE, FUCUS or DRONE.



BER. Now summon in our master bee
With all his swarm, and tell him we
Command our homage.
Fair. He is come.
—Room for great Prorex there, make room.

[1] MS.—*Ober.* Then lead away
To celebrate our holiday.

Ober. What means this slackness?
Pro. Royal sir,
My care made me a loiterer,
To bring in these transgressing bees
Who by deceits and fallacies
Clothed with a smooth and fair intent,
Have wronged me in my government.
Ober. The manner how?
Pro. These wicked three,
The wasp, the drone and humble bee,
Conspired like traitors; first, the wasp
Sought in his covetous paw to grasp
All he could finger; made the sea
Not only his monopoly,
But with his winged swarms scoured the plains,
Robbed and slew our weary swains
Coming from work.[1] The humble bee
(A fly as tyrannous as he)
By a strange, yet legal, stealth
Non-suited bees of all their wealth.[2]
The drone, a bee more merciless,
Our needy commons so oppress
By hoarding up and poisoning th' earth,
Once in three years he'd make a dearth

[1] MS. adds :— *Ober.* Where's Martio
Our general? *Pro.* Confederate too,
For 'gainst his tenure of commission
The coward stood a looker on,
And not alone betrayed their lives
But sold their honey, wax and hives,
And after all the massacre
Yielded himself their prisoner
In policy. The humble bee, &c.

[2] MS. adds :—Ingrosses honey, wax and straw
And pays for 't all with tricks in law.
If any pleader tax his wrong
He gives him fees to hold his tongue,
Or, if law's sentence needs must pass,
To use the writ *Ne noceas.*
Ober. Dicastes' care should hunt such out.
Fair. Alas, his tongue has got the gout.
Pro. The drone, a bee, &c.

(A needless one), transporting more
To strangers than would feed our poor.
At quarter day, if any lacks
His rent, he seize both honey and wax,
Throwing him out to beg and starve;
For which—

Ober. As they, yourself deserve
Due punishment. For servants' sins
We count[1] their masters: Justice wins
More honour and shines more complete
In virtue, by suppressing great
Than hanging poor ones. Yet, because
You have been zealous in our laws,
Your fault we pardon: for delinquents
We have legal punishments.
Vespa that pillaged sea and land,
Engrossing all into his hand,
From all we banish: dead or alive
Never shall Vespa come in hive:
But like a pirate and a thief
Steal and pilfer his relief.
Thou hast fed riots, lusts and rapes,
And drawn vice in such horrid shapes
As very horse-flies, had they known 'em,
For credit's cause yet would not own 'em.
Thy hive's a brothel, housing sin
Against the royalty of kin;
None but thyself could them invent:
Thou'rt both the sin and president.[2]

[1] I have admitted into the text the word "count" from the somewhat different reading of the MS.; the quarto reads "commit," to the metrical ruin of the line.

[2] I have ventured to relegate these lines of the quarto to a footnote, and to put into the text the reading of the MS., which, saying just the same thing, says it without changing the metre.

Thou'st made thy hive a brothel, acted sin
'Gainst Nature and the royalty of kin;
So base as, but thy self, none could invent:
They are all thine own, and thou their president.

For which, as thou thy fame hath lost,
So be thine arms and titles crossed
From forth the roll of heraldry
That blazons our true gentry.[1]
Live ever exiled.—Fucus, you
That engrossed our honey dew,
Bought wax and honey up by the great
(Transporting it as slaves do wheat)—
Your hive (with honey hid in trees
And hollow banks) our poor lame bees
Shall share; and, even as Vespa, so,
Unpatronized, live banished too.
Last, you that by your surly hum
Would needs usurp a Praetor's room;
(Your camlet gown, your purple hood,
And stately phrase scarce understood
Or known from this our Master Bee,
Made the ignorant think that you were he
And pay you reverence): for your hate
To the poor, and envy to our state,
We here degrade, and let you fall
To the dunghill, your original.
From nettles, hemlocks, docks and weeds
(On which your peasant-lineage feeds)
Suck your diet: to be short,
Ne'er see our face nor haunt our court.

Pro. And whither must these flies be sent?

Ober. To everlasting banishment.
Underneath two hanging rocks,
Where babbling Echo sits and mocks
Poor travellers, there lies a grove
With whom the sun's so out of love

[1] "Gentry" is to be read as a trisyllable. The MS continues:—

Raze Nimrod's castle, make all even,
And strive to get a haven in heaven.
Tollatur inquam. Fucus you, &c.

He never smiles on't: pale Despair
Calls it his monarchal chair.
Fruit, half ripe, hang rivelled [1] and shrunk
On broken arms torn from the trunk:
The moorish [2] pools stand empty, left
By water, stol'n by cunning theft
To hollow banks, driven out by snakes,
Adders and newts, that man these lakes:
The mossy weeds, half sweltered, served
As beds for vermin hunger-starved:
The woods are yew-trees, rent and broke
By whirlwinds; here and there an oak
Half-cleft with thunder:—to this grove
We banish them.

All. Some mercy, Jove.

Ober. You should have cried so in your youth,
When Chronos and his daughter Truth
Sojourned amongst you, when you spent
Whole years in riotous merriment,
Thrusting poor bees out of their hives,
Seizing both honey, wax and lives:
You should have called for mercy when
You impaled common blossoms, when,
Instead of giving poor bees food,
You ate their flesh and drank their blood.

All. Be this our warning.

Ober. 'Tis too late:
Fairies, thrust them to their fate.—
Now, Prorex, our chief Master Bee
And viceroy, thus we lesson thee:
Thy preterite [3] errors we forgive,
Provided you hereafter live
In compass: take again your crown,
But make your subjects so your own
As you for them may answer.

[1] Wrinkled. [2] *i.e.* Moorland. [3] Past.

Pro. Sir,
For this high favour you confer,
True loyalty, upon my knee,
I promise both for them and me.
Ober. Rise in our love then; and, that you
What you have promised may pursue,
Chaste Latria I bestow
On you in marriage; she'll teach you how
To be yourself: fair truth and time
Be a watch and constant chime
To all your actions. Now adieu.
Prorex shall again renew
His potent reign; the massy world,
Which in glittering orbs is hurled
About the poles, be lord of: we
Only reserve our royalty.
—Field-music? Oberon must away:
For us our gentle fairies stay:
In the mountains and the rocks
We'll hunt the grey and little fox,
Who destroy our lambs at feed
And spoil the nests where turtles breed
If Vespa, Fucus or proud Error
Fright thy bees and be a terror
To thy groves, 'tis Oberon's will,
As out-laws, you them seize and kill.
—Apollo and the Muses dance:
Art has banished ignorance,
And chased all flies of rape and stealth
From forth our wingèd commonwealth.





HUMOUR OUT OF BREATH.



HUMOUR OUT OF BREATH was licensed in April, 1608, and printed in quarto in the same year. It is described on the title-page as "a Comedy divers times lately acted by the children of the King's Revels." A reprint, limited to fifty copies, was published by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps in 1860, a second reprint is given by Mr. Bullen in his collected edition of Day's Works, 1881. Mr. Bullen suggests that Day may have taken the title of his play from a line in the *Comedy of Errors* (IV. i. 57)—

"Fie, now you run this humour out of breath."



TO SIGNIOR NO-BODY.

WORTHLESS SIR,



PRESENT you with these my imperfect labours, knowing that what defect in me or neglect in the printer hath left imperfect, judgment in you will wink at, if not think absolute.[1] Being to turn a poor friendless child into the world, yet sufficiently featured too, had it been all of one man's getting (woe to the iniquity of Time the whilst !) my desire is to prefer him to your service : in which, as he shall be sure to get nothing, so likewise my hope is, he shall not lose much ; for your bounty neither makes strangers love you, nor your followers envy you. You are a patron worthy the sisterhood, I mean the poor half dozen, for the three elders they climb above my element : the sun, the moon, and the seven stars, being scarce worthy the survey of their workings. I protest I had rather bestow my pains on your good worship for a brace of angels[2] certain, than stand to the bounty of a better man's purse-bearer, or a very good woman's gentleman-usher : my reason is, I cannot attend : your *Bis dat qui cito* stands so like a loadstone over your great gate, that I fear 'twill draw all the iron-pated Muse-mongers about the town in a short time to your patronage. For mine own part I had rather be yours *volens*, than be driven *nolens :* so till I meet you next at your great Castle in Fish Street I'll neither taste of your bounty, nor be drunk to your health.

One of your first followers,

JOHN DAY.

[1] Perfect. [2] About twenty shillings.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OCTAVIO, Duke of Venice, usurping Duke of Mantua.
HIPPOLITO, } his Sons.
FRANCISCO, }
ANTONIO, banished Duke of Mantua.
ASPERO, his Son.
HORTENSIO, Deputy to OCTAVIO, and Guardian of FLORIMEL.
JULIO, Regent of Mantua for OCTAVIO.
FLAMINEO, Attendant on the Duke of Venice.
ASSISTANCE, Servant to HORTENSIO.
Page to HIPPOLITO and FRANCISCO.
Page to FLORIMEL.
Boy, Page to ASPERO.
Lords.
Messengers.

FLORIMEL, Daughter of the Duke of Venice.
HERMIA, } Daughters of the banished Duke of Mantua.
LUCIDA, }

SCENE—VENICE and MANTUA and the intervening country.

HUMOUR OUT OF BREATH.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.—*Venice. An Apartment in the* Duke's *Palace.*

Enter OCTAVIO, HIPPOLITO, FRANCISCO, FLORIMEL, *and* Attendants.



CT. Sons, hopeful buds of fruitful Italy,
Having banished war, which like a prodigal
Kept wasteful revels with our subjects' blood;
Since proud Antonio our arch-enemy
Is in his journey towards the underworld,
Or hovers in the shade of banishment;
Let us in peace smile at our victory,
And every breast pass his opinion
What pastime best becomes a conqueror.

Fran. What sport but conquest for a conqueror?
Then with our wounds undressed, our steeds still armed,
Branded with steel, ere we wipe off the blood
Of conquered foes, let's with our shriller bugles
Summon the surly landlord of the forest,
The kingly lion, to a bloodly parle;
Combat the hart, the leopard, or the boar,
In single or adventurous hardiment[1]:

[1] Defiance, or act of bravery. Compare with this passage the *Arcadia*, p. 34 (ed. 1605):—"But the stagge was in the end so

The spirit of mirth in manly action rests,
Having quelled men, let's now go conquer beasts.
Oct. Manly resolved ; Hippolito's advice ?
Hip. Rather like soldiers, and Octavio's sons,
Let's throw a general challenge through the world
For a proud tourney, at the which ourselves,
Consorted with a hundred of our knights,
Accoutred like so many gods of war,
Will keep the lists 'gainst all adventurers ;
Which like the sun's light figured in a star
Should be a brief epitome of war.
Oct. Noble and royal ; your opinion, daughter ?
Flo. Faith, I shall anger soldiers : I would pour
Spirit of life, *aurum potabile*,[1]
Into the jaws of chap-fallen scholarship,
That have, since amorous Ovid was exiled,
Lain in a swoon. You've many holds for war,
I would once view a garrison for wit :
'Twere heavenly sport to see a train of scholars
Like old trained soldiers skirmish in the schools,
Traverse their Ergos and discharge their jests
Like peals of small-shot ; were this motion granted
My self would be free woman of their hall,
And sit as sister at their festival.
Oct. Have we not Padua ?
Flo. Yes, but the commanders
Deal with our graduates, as the general
Doth with his soldier—gives him place for favour,
Not for deserving ; look into't yourself :
You have courts for tennis, and methinks 'twere meet

hotly pursued that (leaving his flight) he was driven to make courage of dispaire, and so turning his head made the hounds (with change of speech) to testifie that he was at a bay : as if from hot pursuite of their enemy *they were suddenly come to a parley.*"—*Bullen.*

[1] This was the "Universal Medicine of the alchemists, prepared from gold, mercury, etc." The full receipt will be found in *The Fifth and Last Part of the Last Testament of Friar Basilius Valentinus*, London, 1670, pp. 371-377.

Learning should not stand bawling in the street
For want of houseroom: oh, 'tis much unfit
Courtiers should be all pleasure and small wit.

Oct. All that you speak is but what we command.

Flo. But officers, father, cannot understand
Their lords at first: were't not a gallant sight
To see wit's army royal come from fight,
Some crowned with gold, others with wreath of bays?
And whilst they hold their solemn holidays,
Music should like a lover court the skies,
And from the world wrest wringing plaudities.

Hip. My sister would make a rare beggar.

Fran. True, she's parcel[1] poet, parcel fiddler already; and they commonly sing three parts in one.

Oct. Wrong neither art nor music, they are twins
Born and begot in heat: your thought of both?

Flo. I think, my lord, that music is divine,
Whose sacred strains have power to combine
The soul and body; and it reason bears,
For it is said that the celestial spheres
Dance to Apollo's lyre, whose sprightly fires
Have tamed rude beasts, and charmed men's wild desires.
The author was immortal, the first strings
Made by a king, therefore an art for kings:
The world's a body, every liberal art
A needful member, music the soul and heart.

Oct. Well for her sex hath Florimel discoursed
Of heavenly music, and since all conclude
It is an art divine, we were too rude
Should we reject it; music! I take great pride
To hear soft music and thy shrill[2] voice chide.[3]

[1] Part.

[2] Compare Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, I., iv., 33,

"Thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, *shrill* and sound."

[3] Sound; sometimes used thus by the dramatists, without any unfavourable signification.

Flo. To please your grace, though I want voice and skill,
I'll show myself obedient to your will. [*Sings.*

Fran. This would have done rare at a scholar's window.
How do you like it, father?

Oct. Highly, my boys; I relish all delight,
For when the fiery spirit of hot youth
Kept house within me, I was all delight.
Then could I take my love, no love more fair,
By the smooth hand, and gazing in love's air
Tell her her beauty beautified the sky,
And that the sun stole lustre from her eye.

Fran. I do admire to hear my princely father
Thus merrily discourse of trifling love.

Oct. Nay more, my boys, when I was at your years,
I went a pilgrimage through Italy,
To find the shrine of some love-hallowed saint;
Devote to beauty, I would pray for love,
Desiring beauty, I would sue for love,
Admiring beauty, I would serve for love;
Pray, sue and serve, till beauty granted love.
If she denied me, I would swear she granted;
If she did swear that she could never love me,
Then would I swear she could not choose but love me:
Let her swear ne'er so much, still have I sworn,
Till she had said I should not be forsworn.

Flo. Ay, marry, brothers, here was cunning love!
Learn like good scholars, he'll make you wise in love:
He was a man in love; were you such men,
Then were you men indeed, but boys till then.

Fran. To please my father, I'll in quest of beauty,
And never make return till I have found
A love so fair, so rich, so honourable,
As fits the honour of Octavio's sons.

Hip. The like (you pleased) vows young Hippolito.

Oct. Do boys, and I will teach you how to choose them.
Elect not 'mongst whole troops of courtly dames,

For amongst many, some must needs be ill:
The seld-seen[1] Phœnix ever sits alone,
Jove courted Danaë when she was alone:
Alone, my boys, that is the only way,
Ladies yield that alone, they else say nay.

Flo. An expert soldier; how shall they choose them, father?

Oct. If her bright eye dim not the diamond,
Say, it is bright, but brighter gems delight you;
If that her breath do not perfume the air,
Say, it is sweet, but sweeter sweets content you;
If that her cheek, comparèd to the lily,
Make not the lily black with whiter whiteness,
Say, it is lily white, but black to white,
When your choice white must have such high exceeds.

Flo. Father, you do exceed things possible;
Faith, say how many ladies have you seen
Much fairer than myself, in all your travel?

Oct. Should the crow teach me, then no lady fairer;
If judgment tell me, then a many fairer:
Thou art mine own, I must think well of thee,
Yet Florimella, many do excel thee.

Flo. Should the crow teach, I am not all crow black;
Should judgment, I not all perfection lack;[2]
Though you have seen ladies that dim the day,
Yet will I think myself as fair as they.

Oct. Do, Florimella, and I'll one day get
A husband for thee, that shall think thee fair.

Flo. And time, 'i faith; that pretty sport would be;
Wive it for them, you shall not husband me.

Oct. Yet you will take my counsel in your choice?

Flo. Yes, if I had not years enough to choose.
Would you direct me as you do your sons?

[1] Seldom seen.

[2] This is Mr. Bullen's conjectural emendation (not adopted by him) of the evidently misprinted line in the original quarto:—
"Though judgment, I not all perfection black."

With "Daughter, take a man with such a nose,
With such an eye, with such a colour beard,
Thus, big, thus tall, with all his teeth afore;
Thus lipped, thus legged, thus handsome, thus apparelled."
Were not this pitiful? O pitiful!
Now by the soul of soul-commanding love,
I will not stoop to such obedience:
I must be bid to blush when I am kissed,
Bid my love welcome, and "I thank you, sir!"
With "no, indeed, I know not what love is,
I never heard so much of love before,
I pray take heed, nay, fie you go too far!"
With such a rabble of prescriptions[1]
As never maid of a conceiving spirit
Will follow them; yet, brothers, go you on,
Take you good counsel, Florimel will none. [*Exit.*

Oct. Ay, daughter, are you so experienced?
An elder woman might have spoken less.
Yet by your leave, minion, I'll watch you so,
Your "Ay" shall still be governed by my "No."
But come, my sons, take pattern of great Jove,
Early i' the morning suit yourselves for love. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Country between Mantua and Venice.*

Enter ANTONIO *with a net,* HERMIA *and* LUCIDA *with angles.*

Ant. Go, daughters, with your angles to the brook,
And see if any silver-coated fish
Will nibble at your worm-embowelled hooks:
Deceive the watery subjects, yet the name
Of foul deceit, methinks, should fray[2] them from you.

[1] Directions. [2] Frighten.

Alack, alack, I cannot blame the world,
That in the world there is so much deceit,
When this poor simple trade must use deceit.
But with what conscience can I make this net,
Within whose meshes all are caught that come?
They cozen one at once, this cozens many;
I will undo't, it shall not cozen any.
But, daughters, go, practise that little sin;
I'll mend this great fault ere the fault begin.
O, cozening fortune, how hast thou deceived me,
Turning me out of doors to banishment,
And made another lord to Mantua,
I that was lord now slave to misery.

Her. Take comfort yet, dear father.

Ant. Comfort? no.
My breast's turned prison, my proud jailor, woe,
Locks out all comfort: where's your valiant brother?

Her. All discontent, like to a wounded lion
He forages the woods, daring proud fortune
At her best weapon; he accounts this smart
As a slight hurt, but far off from the heart.

Ant. How holds his humour?

Luc. The same fashion still:
But somewhat sadder-coloured: death may end
But never change him; see, our words have raised him.

Enter ASPERO *with* Boy.

Ant. Fitly applied, for a[1] walks like a ghost.
Why, how now, son?

Asp. Peace.

Her. Brother,—

Asp. Good now, peace,
Wake me not, as you love me.

Luc. What, asleep?

Asp. Ay, in a most sweet sleep, blisters o' your tongues for waking me.

[1] He.

With "Daughter, take a man with such a nose,
With such an eye, with such a colour beard,
Thus, big, thus tall, with all his teeth afore;
Thus lipped, thus legged, thus handsome, thus apparelled."
Were not this pitiful? O pitiful!
Now by the soul of soul-commanding love,
I will not stoop to such obedience:
I must be bid to blush when I am kissed,
Bid my love welcome, and "I thank you, sir!"
With "no, indeed, I know not what love is,
I never heard so much of love before,
I pray take heed, nay, fie you go too far!"
With such a rabble of prescriptions[1]
As never maid of a conceiving spirit
Will follow them; yet, brothers, go you on,
Take you good counsel, Florimel will none. [*Exit.*

Oct. Ay, daughter, are you so experienced?
An elder woman might have spoken less.
Yet by your leave, minion, I'll watch you so,
Your "Ay" shall still be governed by my "No."
But come, my sons, take pattern of great Jove,
Early i' the morning suit yourselves for love. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Country between Mantua and Venice.*

Enter ANTONIO *with a net,* HERMIA *and* LUCIDA *with angles.*

Ant. Go, daughters, with your angles to the brook,
And see if any silver-coated fish
Will nibble at your worm-embowelled hooks:
Deceive the watery subjects, yet the name
Of foul deceit, methinks, should fray[2] them from you.

[1] Directions. [2] Frighten.

Alack, alack, I cannot blame the world,
That in the world there is so much deceit,
When this poor simple trade must use deceit.
But with what conscience can I make this net,
Within whose meshes all are caught that come?
They cozen one at once, this cozens many;
I will undo't, it shall not cozen any.
But, daughters, go, practise that little sin;
I'll mend this great fault ere the fault begin.
O, cozening fortune, how hast thou deceived me,
Turning me out of doors to banishment,
And made another lord to Mantua,
I that was lord now slave to misery.

Her. Take comfort yet, dear father.

Ant. Comfort? no:
My breast's turned prison, my proud jailor, woe,
Locks out all comfort: where's your valiant brother?

Her. All discontent, like to a wounded lion
He forages the woods, daring proud fortune
At her best weapon; he accounts this smart
As a slight hurt, but far off from the heart.

Ant. How holds his humour?

Luc. The same fashion still:
But somewhat sadder-coloured: death may end
But never change him; see, our words have raised him.

Enter ASPERO *with* Boy.

Ant. Fitly applied, for a[1] walks like a ghost.
Why, how now, son?

Asp. Peace.

Her. Brother,—

Asp. Good now, peace,
Wake me not, as you love me.

Luc. What, asleep?

Asp. Ay, in a most sweet sleep, blisters o' your tongues for waking me.

[1] He.

Ant. Thou forgettest thyself.

Asp. I should not be a courtier else; methought I was at a strange wedding.

Ant. Prithee, what wedding?

Asp. Of a young lawyer and old Madam Conscience.

Ant. I scarce believe that.

Asp. Nor I neither, because it was a dream: but methought the young man doted on the old woman exceedingly.

Ant. That was miraculous! Did they live together.

Asp. In the country they did, and agreed passing well all the long vacation; and but for two things, he would have carried her up to the term with him.

Ant. What things were those?

Asp. One was, because her gown was of the old fashion; the other was, 'cause he would not have her by when he took fees.

Ant. His reason for that?

Asp. For fear if a bribe had been offered, she being by, he should have had the bad conscience to take it.

Ant. His wife and he lived together?

Asp. Conscience and the lawyer, as lovingly as men and their wives do, but neither meddle nor make one with another.

Ant. Man and wife part, that's strange!

Asp. O Lord, sir, profit can part the soul and the body, and why not man and wife? now you have had my dream, father, let me understand yours.

Ant. How can he dream that never sleeps, my son?

Asp. O best of all: why, your whole world doth nothing but dream: your Machiavel he dreams of state, deposing kings, grounding new monarchies; the lover he dreams of kisses, amorous embraces: the new-married wife dreams that rid of her young husband she hugs her old love, and likes her dream well enough too; the country gentlewoman dreams that when her first husband's dead, she marries a knight, and the name of lady sticks

so in her mind that she's never at heart's ease till she get her husband dubbed; the captain he dreams of oppressing the soldiers, devising strategies to keep his dream; and that dream wakes in the pate of Octavio your arch-enemy, who is not content to hurl us into the whirlpool of banishment, but binds weights at our heels, leaden poverty, to sink us to the very depth that we should never rise again.

Her. Then since all dream, let us dream of revenge.

Asp. Ay, marry, sister, that were a dream worth dreaming, and I'll sleep out my brains but I'll compass it.

Ant. Pretty content; we kill our foes in dreams.

Asp. 'Uds foot, I'll do it waking then.

Ant. Aspero!

Asp. At council table—

Ant. Hear me.

Asp. In his duchess' arms! 'twere base to go disguised;

No, my revenge shall wear an open brow;
I will not play the coward, kill him first
And send my challenge after; I'll make known
My name, and cause of coming; if I thought
Grief like a painter had so spoiled my visage
He could not know me, on my breast I'd write
"Howe'er I am disfigurèd through woe,
I am the thing was made for Aspero."
Speak not, I am as constant as the centre;
Some fortune, good or bad, doth beckon me,
And I will run; bitter revenge tastes sweet:
If ne'er on earth, farewell, in heaven we'll meet.
Attendance, sirrah; your low comedy
Craves but few actors, we'll break company.

[*Exit with* Boy

Ant. As many blessings as the sea hath sands,
Attend thee in thine honourable journey.
Come pretty maids, we have not wrought to-day,
Or fish or fast, our need must needs obey. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—*Venice. The* Duke's *Palace.*

Enter HIPPOLITO, FRANCISCO, FLORIMEL, *and* Page *meeting them.*

Fran. Now, sirrah, what have you been about?

Page. About my living, sir.

Hip. What's that? feeding?

Page. No, sir, looking into the under-officers about the court.

Hip. Canst get any living out of them?

Page. Ay, sir, my betters get good livings out of officers, and why not I? but to be plain, I have been seeking your good lordship.

Fran. But your boyship hath so sought us, that we have found you.

Page. Will you sell your findings, my lord?

Hip. They are scarce worth giving.

Flo. Yes, a box to keep them in, for fear you lose them again.

Page. An I were a man as I am no woman, I'd pepper your box for that jest.

Flo. You jest.

Page. In earnest law I would, madam.

Fran. Well, sir, no more, here comes our royal father.

Enter OCTAVIO, HORTENSIO, FLAMINEO, *with* Attendants.

Oct. How now, my boys? provided for your journey?
Beauty conduct you: what, attired like shepherds?
I thought to have seen you mounted on your steeds,
Whose fiery stomachs from their nostrils breathe
The smoke of courage, and whose wanton mouths
Do proudly play upon their iron bits;
And you, instead of these poor weeds, in robes
Richer than that which Ariadne wrought,
Or Cytherea's airy-moving vestment.

Thus should you seem like lovers; suited thus
You'd draw fair ladies' hearts into their eyes,
And strike the world dead with astonishment.

Fran. Father, such cost doth pass your sons' revenues.
We take example from immortal Jove,
Who like a shepherd would repair to love.

Oct. And gentle love conduct you both, my sons;
Daughter, go bring them onward in their way.
Were we not called back by important business,
We would not leave you thus.—[*Aside*] Hortensio,
Is my disguise prepared? for I unknown
Will see how they behave themselves in love.

Hort. 'Tis done, my lord.

Oct. Once more, my boys, adieu.

[*Aside.*] He sends you forth that means to follow you.
[*Exit.*

Flo. Now, brothers, you must amongst these wenches; faith, for a wager, which shall get the fairest?

Fran. I'll gage a hundred crowns mine proves the fairest.

Hip. A match, I'll venture twice so much of mine.

Flo. And I'll lay 'gainst you both, that both your loves, get them when you can, where you can, or how you can, shall not be able to compare with me in beauty.

Fran. That wager I'll take, for 'tis surely won.

Hip. 'Las, thou art but a star to beauty's sun.

Flo. Star me no stars, go you and stare for love;
I'll stay at home, and with my homely beauty
Purchase a love, shall think my looks as fair
As those fair loves that you shall fetch so far;
But take your course, fate send you both fair luck.

Fran. How if 't be foul?

Flo. Nay, if't be forked, you must bear it off with head and shoulders.

Fran. O stale, that jest runs o'the lees.

Flo. You must consider 'tis drawn out of the bottom of my wit.

Fran. O shallow wit, at the bottom so soon.

Flo. Deep enough to lay you in the mire.

Page. Or else 'tis shallow indeed, for they are foundered already; but I must play dun,[1] and draw them all out o' the mire.—What's o' clock my lord?

Flo. Which of them dost ask? thou seest they are two.

Page. What two are are they, madam?

Flo. Why, two fools

Fran. Is it not past two? doth it not come somewhat near three, sister?

Page. Show perryall[2] and tak't; but come, my lord, you have stood fooling long enough, will you about your business in good earnest?

Fran. Indeed we will.

Flo. And they are deeds you must trust too, for woman will respect your words but slightly without deeds.

Page. Why are women called angels, but because they delight in good deeds? and love Heaven, but that it will not be won without them?

Fran. They shall have deeds.

Flo. Brother, and good deeds too:

They are tongues that men must speak with when they woo.

Hip. That tongue we'll practise; sister, to love we leave you. [*Exeunt* HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO.

Flo. Lovers, take heed lest cunning love deceive you. [*Exit with* Page.

[1] "A log of wood was brought into the midst of the room: this is the *Dun* (the cart-horse), and a cry is raised that he is stuck in the mire. Two of the company then advance, either with or without ropes, to draw him out. After repeated attempts, they find themselves unable to do it, and call for more assistance. The game continues till all the company take part in it, when *Dun* is extricated of course; and the merriment arises from the awkward and affected efforts of the rustics to raise the log, and sundry arch contrivances to let the ends of it fall on one another's toes."—Gifford's *Jonson*, vii., 283.

[2] This is a corruption of "pair-royal" (frequently found in the shortened form "prial"). "A Pair is a pair of any two, as two kings, two queens, &c. A *pair-royal* is of three, as three kings, three queens, &c."—Cotton's *Compleat Gamester*.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.—*The Country near Venice.*

Enter OCTAVIO *disguised*, HORTENSIO, *and* FLAMINEO.

OCT. No more; thus suited[1] I'll attend my sons.
Impute it not to any ruffian vein,
But to a father's wakeful providence.
Lovers like bees are privileged to taste
All buds of beauty; should they chance
Upon some worthless weed I'll hinder it: [to light[2]
The eyes of youth will now and then dwell there
Whereas they should not glance; this doubt I fear.

Fla. And well advised, my liege; should they incline
To love not fitting their estates and births,
You with your present counsel may prevent them.

Oct. That's my intent; and further, in my absence
I leave my land and daughter to thy charge.
The girl is wanton; if she gad abroad
Restrain her, bound[3] her in her chamber door;
My word's thy warrant, let her know so much.
Farewell, at home I leave my fear with thee,
And follow doubt abroad.

Hort. I'll careful be.

[*Exeunt* HORTENSIO *and* FLAMINEO.

[1] Dressed.

[2] Emendation proposed by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps. The line reads in the quarto,

"All buds of beauty; should they light."

[3] Confine.

Oct. Now to my business; I have a strange habit, and must cut out a humour suitable to it, and humours are picked so near the bone, a man can scarce get humour enough to give a flea his breakfast: but I am a stale ruffian, my habit is brave, and so shall my humour be, and here comes one to give me earnest of it.

Enter ASPERO *and* Boy.

Asp. Send him a letter that I come to kill him.

Boy. 'Twere great valour, but little policy, my lord.

Asp. How long have you been a Machiavellian, boy?

Boy. Ever since I practised to play the knave, my lord;

Asp. Then policy and knavery are somewhat akin?

Boy. As near as penury and gentry; a degree and a half removed, no more.

Asp. How came in the kin 'twixt gentry and penury?

Oct. Shall I tell you, sir?

Asp. First, tell me what thou art?

Oct. Lime and hair; plaster of Paris kneaded together with rye-dough and goats' milk; I am of a hot constitution, wonnot freeze.

Asp. Thy profession?

Oct. A fool or a knave, choose you which.

Boy. Then thou art fit for any gentleman's company.

Oct. True, boy, for your sweet fool and your fine knave are like a pair of upright shoes,[1] that gentlemen wear so long, now of one foot, then of another, till they leave them never a good sole.

Asp. That makes your fool and your knave have such bad souls; but what dost thou seek?

Oct. Mine own undoing, sir,—service.

Asp. Indeed service is like the common law, it undoes any one that follows it long. Canst describe service?

[1] Straight shoes, shoes that will fit either foot. C.f. *The Fleire*, 1615:—"This fellow is like your upright shoe, he will serve either foot."—*Bullen.*

Oct. Yes, 'tis a vacant place, filled up with a complete knave, a miserable pander, or an absolute beggar.

Asp. Your opinion, boy?

Boy. I say a serving-man is an antecedent.

Oct. Because he fits like a cloak-bag?

Boy. He is likewise a nominative case, and goes before his mistress.

Oct. That's when the verb he goes before, his mistress, and he can agree together.

Boy. If not, he turns accusative and follows his master.

Asp. Woo't follow me, fellow?

Oct. To a tavern, an thou woo't pay for my ordinary.[1]

Asp. My business is more serious, thou dost not know me.

Oct. Nor myself neither, so long as I have maintenance.

Asp. Didst never hear of the wars betwixt Venice and Mantua?

Oct. I cut some few of the Mantuans' throats.

Asp. And wert not a knave for't?

Oct. No, I was a Venetian commander, a great man. The reason of this question?

Asp. Dost know the Duke of Venice?

Oct. I am his right hand.

Asp. Woo't do me a message to him?

Oct. What is't?

Asp. Tell him I hate him; my name's Aspero; he has banished my father, usurps his dukedom, and I come to be revenged.

Oct. Antonio's son? 'udsfoot, hast any gold?

Asp. Thy reason?

Oct. 'Shalt be revenged. Give me money, I'll be thy snail and score out a silver path to his confusion.

[1] *i.e.* Pay my score.

Asp. No, my revenge shall be like my father's wrongs, *in aperto;* lend me any honest aid.

Oct. Pox of honesty, it goes a-begging upon crutches; and can get relief out of few but scholars. I shall not kill him?

Asp. I'd be thy death first.

Oct. Yet you say you hate him.

Asp. Equal with my shame.

Oct. Make him chew a bullet then.

Asp. No, though my state with poverty be tainted,
Mine acts and honour shall live still acquainted.

Oct. [*Aside*] True moulded honour: I admire the temper
Of thy mild patience; that not all the wrongs
I laid upon thee can enforce thy spleen
To foul requital: had thy coming ta'en
Any base level, it had cost thy life;
But being free, and full of honour, live;
Thy virtues teach me honour; freely go:
A secret friend's worse than an open foe.—
You are too honest for my attendance; farewell, sir.
[*Exit.*

Asp. And thou too knavish for my employment.
But here comes more company.

Enter FLORIMEL *and* Page.

Flo. Boy, let your attendance wait further off; under this shade I mean to take a sleep.

Page. And may you, madam, like a soldier sleep.

Flo. How, boy, in alarums?

Page. No, lady, but in arms, and you had need of them too; for see the enemy comes down. Shall I sound a parley?

Flo. Peace, wag.

Page. Peace! O coward, offer peace and but two to two of them!

Flo. Boy, dost thou know what gentleman it is?

Page. Gentle madam, no; but he is a man.

Flo. Believe me, boy, he is a proper man.

Page. Man is a proper name to a man, and so he may be a proper man.

Flo. I love him, he's a very proper man.

Page. She loves him for his properties, and indeed many women love men only to make properties of them.

Flo. Pray, gentleman, if no more, tell me where you were born.

Asp. Fair virgin, if so much, no where, some where, any where, where you would have me.

Flo. Faith, I would have it.

Asp. Marry, and you shall have it, lady.

Flo. What shall I have, sir?

Asp. Why, a kiss.

Flo. Nothing else? we courtiers count them trifles, not worth taking.

Asp. Why then, bestow one of me; I'll take it most thankfully.

Flo. I will not stand with you for a trifle, sir; pray where were you born?

Asp. In Italy, but never yet in Venice.

Flo. You may in Venice; gentle sir, adieu. [*Exit.*

Asp. Gentle lady, thrice as much to you.

Page. Farewell, sweet heart. [*Exit.*

Boy. Gad a mercy, bagpudding.[1]

Asp. "You may in Venice; gentle sir, adieu." This begets wonder.

Boy. You're not wise then; what do you take her for?

Asp. Some great woman.

Boy. Some woman great with child. Be ruled; she's a pink.[2] Board her.

Asp. But how? the means?

[1] "A term of contempt derived from a rustic dish, of which we have no very clear conception, but it was probably like our roly-poly puddings." — Wright's *Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English.*

[2] *Pink*, a small boat, was used as a cant term for a loose woman.

Boy. Make but a shot of flattery at her broadside, and she'll strike sail presently.

Asp. Flattery?

Boy. Ay, flattery; women are like fiddlers; speak them fair, they'll play of any instrument.

Asp. Ay, that they can play of.

Boy. She's a botcher that cannot play a little of all.

Asp. And too common that will play too much of any; but come, I'll use means to get her.

Boy. Nay, you must first have means to give her.

Asp. Why, in the course of scholarship the genitive case goes before the dative.

Boy. The grammarians are fools that placed them so; for *in rerum natura* the dative goes before the genitive; you must always give before you can get; lovers are fools, and fools must be liberal.

Asp. Will not women respect a man for his good parts?

Boy. Yes, some few; but all for his good gifts. A gentleman with his good gifts sits at the upper end of the table on a chair and a cushion, when a scholar with his good parts will be glad of a joint-stool in the lobby with the chambermaids.

Asp. I will have good gifts and show myself liberal too, though I beg for't,

Boy. I think that will be the end; for penury has ta'en a lease of your pocket to keep court in this Christmas.

Asp. Well, howsoe'er, she's fair and courteous;
And courteous fair is a fair gift in ladies:
She may be well descended; if she be,
She's fit for love, and why not then for me? [*Exit.*

Boy. An you be not fitted in Venice 'tis strange, for 'tis counted the best flesh-shambles in Italy: but here's no notable coward, that having suffered wrong by a man, seeks to right himself of a woman. [*Exit, following.*

SCENE II.—*The Country between Venice and Mantua.*

Enter HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO, *as* Shepherds, OCTAVIO *in disguise.*

Oct. Look you sir, I am like an Irish beggar and an English burr, will stick close where I find a good nap; I must and will dwell with you.

Fran. What canst do?

Oct. Still[1] aquavitæ, stamp crabs,[2] and make mustard; I can do as much as all the men you keep.

Fran. Prithee, what?

Oct. Why undo you, and twenty could do no more. But business; come, my wits grow rusty for employment.

Fran. Canst keep counsel?

Oct. My mother was a midwife.

Hip. Hast any skill in love?

Oct. I am one of Cupid's agents; have Ovid's *Ars Amandi ad ungues;* know *causam,* and can apply *remedium,* and minister *effectum* to a hair. But why do you ask? have you traversed an action in love's spiritual court?

Fran. Not to dissemble, we have.

Oct. And without dissembling, you'll never come out of it; but tell me true, are you in love already? or have you but desire to be in love?

Fran. Indeed I am in love to be in love.

Hip. And I desire to live in fond desire,
And yet I doubt to touch blind fancy's fire.

Oct. 'Tis good to doubt, but 'tis not good to fear,
Yet still to doubt will at the last prove fear;
Doubt love, 'tis good, but 'tis not good to fear it,
Love hurts them most, that least of all come near it.

Fran. Then to doubt love is the next way to love.

Oct. Doubtless it is, if you misdoubt not love.

[1] *i.e.* Distil.

[2] "Verjuice is made by stamping or pounding the crab apple."—*urhott* (Lilly, ii., 274), quoted by *Bullen.*

Hip. Doubt and misdoubt, what difference is there here?

Oct. Yes, much; when men misdoubt, 'tis said they fear.

Fran. But is it good in love to be in doubt?

Oct. No, not in love, doubt then is jealousy:
'Tis good to doubt before you be in love;
Doubt counsels how to shun love's misery.

Fran. Your doubtful counsel counsels us to love.

Oct. To equal love, I like experience speak.

Hip. Experienced lover, you have spoken well.

Oct. Experience-wanting lovers, truth I tell;
Young wits be wise, in love live constant still,
You need nor doubt good hap, nor misdoubt ill.

Enter LUCIDA *and* HERMIA *with angles.*

And see, your discourse has conjured up beauty in the likeness of two country-maids, but you shall not come in the circles of their arms, if I can keep you out.

Fran. These are too mean for love; brother, let's leave them.

Oct. What, speechless? will you make dumb virgins of them?

Hip. Oh, we are sons of a great father.

Oct. So is the sun of Heaven, yet he smiles on the bramble as well as the lily; kisses the cheek of a beggar as lovingly as a gentlewoman, and 'tis good to imitate him, 'tis good.

Her. Say, sister, had we not fine sport to-day?

Luc. We had, if death may be accounted play.

Her. Why, 'tis accounted pleasure to kill fish.

Luc. A pleasure nothing pleasure to the fish.

Her. Yet fishes were created to be killed.

Luc. Cruel creation then, to have lives spilled.

Her. Their bodies being food, maintain our breath.

Luc. What bodies then have we, to live by death?

Her. Come, come, you vainly argue; it is good.

Luc. What, it is good to kill? O God, O God!

Her. If it be sin, then you your self's a sinner.

Luc. I thank proud fortune for't, my woes' beginner.

Oct. 'Foot, are ye not ashamed to stand by like idle ciphers, and such places of account void? and if they had been rich offices, and you poor courtiers, you would have been in them in half the time.

Fran. Though against stomach—

Oct. Nothing against stomach, an you love me.

Hip. Fair maids, if so you be, you are well met.

Her. Shepherds, or be what else you are, well met.

Fran. 'Tis well, if that well met we be to you.

Luc. If not to us, you are unto your selves.

Hip. We did not meet, you saw us come together.

Her. Whate'er we saw, you met ere you came hither.

Fran. We did, we met in kindred, we are brothers.

Luc. So shepherds, we did meet, for we are sisters.

Hip. Then, sisters, let us brothers husbands be.

Her. So, brothers, without our leaves, you well may be.

Fran. Say, we desire to husband it with you,

Luc. Know we desire no husbands such as you.

Hip. A shepherd is an honest trade of life.

Her. Yet shepherd has with honest trade some strife.[1]

Hip. He seldom swears but by his honesty.

Her. So honest men do too as well as he.

Fran. But will you trust a shepherd when he vows?

Luc. No, never; if that his oath be that he loves.

Hip. Yet if I swear, that needs must be mine oath.

Her. Swear not, for we are misbelievers both.

Fran. Let us persuade you to believe we love you.

Luc. First, we entreat you give us time to prove you.

Hip. Take time, meantime we'll praise ye to our powers.

Her. O time, sometime shepherds have idle hours.

Fran. I'll say thy cheek no natural beauty lacks.

[1] The quarto reads, "Yet honest shepherd has with honest trade some strife,"—a probable printer's error.

Luc. Good, if it had been spoke behind our backs.

Hip. I'll say this is the Heaven of heavenly graces.

Her. O Heaven, how they can flatter to our faces.

[*Exeunt* HERMIA *and* LUCIDA.

Fran. Brother, the last is fairest in my eye.

Hip. Ay, but the first, brother, is first in beauty.

Fran. First in your choice, but not in beauty sir.

Oct. [*Aside*] Come ye so near as choice: 'tis time for me to stop, for fear the music runs too far out of tune.—How now, gallants? in dumps?

Fran. No, but in love.

Oct. That's a dump, love's nothing but an Italian dump [1] or a French brawl.[2]

Hip. Methinks 'tis sweeter music.

Oct. An 'twere in tune, I confess it; but you take your parts too low, you are treble courtiers, and will never agree with these country minnikins;[3] the music's too base, never meddle in't.

Fran. Peace, dotard, peace; thy sight of love is done,
Thou canst not see the glory of love's sun:
Spent age with frosty clouds thy sight doth dim,
That thou art blind to see, and apt to sin.

Oct. Is it accounted sin to speak the truth?

Hip. And worse, when age spits poison against youth.

Oct. They do not fit your callings; let them go.

Fran. Yet they are fair: we love; thou art love's foe.

Oct. I am your friend, and wish you from this love.

Hip. Canst thou heave hills? then thou my thoughts may'st move,
But never else.

Oct. Never?

Fran. No, never.

Oct. Stay.

[1] A slow dance.

[2] From *brandle*, the French name for the same dance, which was brought from France about the middle of the 16th century.

[3] The treble string in a lute.

Hip. We are bound for love.
Oct. Hate.
Fran. Hinder not our way.
[*Exeunt* HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO.

Oct. Ay, boys; will eagle's eaglets turn to bastards?
Then must I change my vein, and once more prove,
To teach you how to hate as well as love. [*Exit, following.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.—*The Country near Venice.*

Enter FLORIMEL *and* Page.

PAGE. Sweet honey candy madam, if it be no forfeit to tell tales out of Cupid's free school, tell what proficient your lover Aspero proves?

Flo. Now, so love help me, la, a passing weak one and very unready.

Page. The better, for women would have their lovers unready to choose.

Flo. How ready you are to play the knave! But to Aspero.

Page. I do not think but there's good music in him; your tongue harps so much upon his name.

Flo. I shall never forget him.

Page. I'faith, lady, then I know what I know.

Flo. What do you know, I pray?

Page. Marry, that if you never forget him, you shall ever remember him. Was he never in your chamber?

Flo. Yes, but he showed himself the strangest fool. And by my troth, la, I am sorry for't too. I had as good an appetite to maintain discourse—but here a comes. [*Enter* ASPERO.]—If ever I choose a man by the fulness of his calf, or a cock by the crowing—Look, an the bashful fool do not blush already.

Page. You may do well to kiss him, and make him bold, madam.

Flo. Boy, go know what strange gentleman that is?

Asp. 'Slid, what a strange lady's this? Madam, though I seem a stranger to you, I lay with one last night that's well acquainted with you.

Flo. Acquainted with me?

Asp. And knows you, and loves you, and you love him, and have bestowed kind favours of him too.

Flo. I bestow favours! what favours?

Asp. Though 'twere but a trifle, he took it as kindly as some would have done; a kiss.

Flo. Lord, what a while this jest has been a brooding! and it proves but addle, too, now it is hatched.

Asp. 'Tis a pig of your own sow, madam; and I hope your wit will bestow the nursing of it.

Flo. So it had need, I think; 'tis like to have but a dry nurse of yours.

Page. O, dry jest! all the wit in your head will scarce make sippets in't. What! aground, and such a fair landing place? get ashore, or be ranked among fools for ever.

Flo. And faith, is't not a pity such a proper man should keep company with a fool?

Asp. I keep company with none but you, lady.

Flo. You keep mine against my will.

Asp. So do I the fools, I protest; but take away yours, I'll soon shift away the fools.

Page. I have not seen a fool so handsomely shifted in Venice.

Asp. But come, shall the fool and you be friends?

Flo. The fool and I? you're too familiar.

Asp. Why, I hope a fool may be a lady's familiar at all times.

Flo. Come, you're too saucy.

Asp. Indeed, 'tis a fool's part of Joan to be in the sauce afore my lady; otherwise, I am neither fool nor saucy.

Flo. Not, proud sir?

Asp. Not, coy lady; come, why should your tongue

make so many false fires that never come from your heart? you love me, I know you love me; your spirit, your look, your countenance bewrays it.

Flo. You jest.

Asp. In earnest you do, and you shall know't in earnest too: lend me this jewel.

Flo. Jewel? away, you sharking[1] companion.

Asp. How?

Flo. Wandering stravagant, that like a drone flies humming from one land to another!

Page. 'Slight, an thou hast any wit, now show her thy sting.

Flo. And lightest upon every dairy-maid and kitchen-wench.

Asp. And now and then on a lady's lip, as—

Flo. You did of mine, you would say; and I am heart-sorry you can say it; and when by your buzzing flattery you have sucked the smallest favour from them, you presently make wing for another.

Asp. Marry, buzz.

Flo. Double the zard, and take the whole meaning for your labour.

Page. The buzzard's wit's not so bald yet, I trow.

Asp. A word in your ear, madam; the buzzard will anger you.

Flo. With staying, you do.

Asp. With going, I shall.

Flo. Away.

Asp. Ay, away; never entreat, 'tis too late: if you send after me, I will not come back; if you write to me, I will not answer; drown your eyes in tears, I will not wipe them; break your heart with sighs, I will not pity you: never look, signs cannot move me; if you speak, 'tis too late; if you entreat, 'tis bootless; if you hang upon me, 'tis needless: I offered love, and you scorned it; my absence will be your death, and I am proud on't. [*Exit.*

[1] Thieving.

Flo. Is he gone, boy?

Page. Yes, faith, madam.

Flo. Clean out of sight?

Page. And out of mind too, or else you have not the mind of a true woman.

Flo. Thou read'st a false comment, boy; call him again; yet do not, my heart shall break ere it bend.

Page. Or else it holds not the true temper of womanhood; but faith, tell me, madam, do you love him?

Flo. As a Welshman doth toasted cheese; I cannot dine without him; he's my pillow, I cannot sleep quietly without him; my rest, I cannot live without him.

Page. O that he knew it, lady,

Flo. He does; he would never have left me else. He does.

Page. You called him fool, but methinks he proves a physician, has found the disease of your liver by the complexion of your looks; but see, he returns.

Re-enter ASPERO, *as meditating.*

Flo. And now, methinks, I loathe him more than I loved him; go run for Hortensio my guardian, bid him come armed; there's intent of treason, tell him.

Page. My lady cannot choose but dance well, she's so full of pretty changes. [*Exit.*

Flo. I wonder you dare come in my sight, considering the wrong you did me.

Asp. I came I confess, but with no intent to see you I protest, and that shall be manifested by the shortness of my stay.

Flo. 'Tis too long, an 'twere shorter than 'tis:—[*Aside*] will he not court me? not? nor speak to me neither?—Nay, never ask pardon, 'tis too late, we shall ha' you come to my window one o' these mornings with music; but do not, my patience is too much out of tune; out of my sight, I hate thee worse than I loathe painting; I hate thee, out of my sight.

Asp. Enough; will you be a quiet woman yet? will you speak before my resolve takes strength? will you? do but say you are sorry, I ask no mends but a kiss, kindly, come: shall I ha't?

Flo. I'll kiss a toad first.

Asp. You will remember this another time; a toad! you will: I know thou lov'st me, and I see the pride of thy humour; I do, and thou shalt know I do; half an hour hence we shall have you weeping on your knees, with "O my Aspero, would I had died when I rejected thee!" but do, weep till I pity thee; a toad! I'll make thee creep on thy knees for a kiss.

Flo. You will?

Asp. Thy bare knees; I will,—and go without it too.

Flo. Out-humoured? O, I would sell my part of immortality.

Asp. But to touch my hand, thou would'st, I know thou would'st.

Flo. O, how spleen swells me! Help, Hortensio! Creep a[1] my knees? Hortensio!

Enter HORTENSIO *and* ASSISTANCE.

Hort. How fares my beauteous charge? weeping, lady?
The law shall fetch red water from his veins
That hath drawn blood of your eyes; is this the traitor?

Asp. Traitor! in thy disloyal throat thou liest.

Page. O monstrous, a wishes you choked, my lord.

Hort. How? choked?

Page. Ay, choked; for a wishes the traitor in your throat; and he's a very small traitor that is not able to choke a wiser man than your lordship.

Hort. Down with him.

Page. Ay, down with him, if he stick in your throat, and spare not.

Flo. Do not kill him; though he deserves death, yet do not kill him, only disweapon him; so.

[1] On.

Hort. But, madam—

Flo. I will not hear him; keep him; but keep him safe on your lives; if he get away or miscarry in prison, as I am heir of Venice, I'll have your heads for't.

[HORTENSIO *and* ASSISTANCE *bind* ASPERO.

Hort. I warrant you, madam, if irons will hold him.

Flo. Fie, fie, with a cord? Here, bind him with my scarf, that will hold; and yet stand away, I'll do't myself; I cannot trust him with you, lest you should let him sometime 'scape free; besides, you cannot use him according to the quality of his offence, and, because I'll glory in his bondage, my chamber shall be his prison; let him have neither light, meat nor drink, but what I provide him myself.

Hort. Your will's a law; we obey it, madam.

Asp. She knows me sure; well, though my joys be thrall,
My comfort's this, a speedy death ends all.

[*Exeunt* ASPERO, HORTENSIO, *and* ASSISTANCE.

Flo. O, you are not gone, then.

Page. Here's a new kind of courting, never seen before, I think.

Flo. He would anger me.

Page. Nay, you would take a course to anger him first, I think.

Flo. Should I have let him go (as I could no other way detain him in modesty), and he had set his love on some other, 'twould have fretted my heart-strings asunder.

Page. Why did you set him so light then?

Flo. Not for any hate, but in pride of my humour.

Page. Why did you command him close prisoner to your chamber?

Flo. That I may feed mine eye with the sight of him, and be sure no other beauty can rob me of his company: I will ha't all, I will not lose an inch of him. And in this I but imitate our Italian dames, who cause their friends to clap their jealous husbands in prison, that if

they have occasion to use them within forty weeks and a day, they may surely know where to find them. [*Exit.*

Page. If I had any knavery in me, as I am all honesty, I could make a notable scene of mirth between these two amorists. [*Exit, following.*

SCENE II.—*The Country between Venice and Mantua.*

Enter ANTONIO *with a net.*

Ant. Early sorrow, art got up so soon?
What, ere the sun ascendeth in the East?
O what an early waker art thou grown!
But cease discourse, and close unto thy work;
Under this drooping myrtle will I sit,
And work awhile upon my corded net,
And, as I work, record my sorrows past,
Asking old Time, how long my woes shall last.
And first,—but stay, alas! what do I see?
Moist gum, like tears, drop from this mournful tree;
And see, it sticks like birdlime; 'twill not part;
Sorrow is even such birdlime at my heart.
Alas, poor tree, dost thou want company?
Thou dost, I see't, and I will weep with thee;
Thy sorrows make thee dumb, and so shall mine,
It shall be tongueless, and so seem like thine.
Thus will I rest my head unto thy bark,
Whilst my sighs tell my sorrows; hark, tree, hark.

Enter HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO, *still as* Shepherds.

Fran. Fie, fie, how heavy is light love in me!
Hip. How slow runs swift desire!
Fran. This leaden air,
This ponderous feather, merry melancholy.
Hip. This passion which but in passion
Hath not his perfect shape.

Fran. And sleepless[1] love
Hath in his watch of love o'erslept himself.
Hip. Then, sleepy wakers, leave this grove;[2] let's wander,
And wait the ascension of beauty's wonder.
But stay, a man striving 'twixt life and death!
Fran. Nay, then 'tis so, my heavenly love's gone by,
And struck him dead with her love-darting eye.
Hip. If speech-bereaving love will let thee speak,
Then, speechless man, speak with the tongue of love,
And tell me, if thou saw'st not Cynthia
Seeking Endymion in these flowery dales.
Ant. Dales for Endymion and fair Cynthia fit,
But never heavenly goddess blest this grove;
These woods are consecrate to grief, not love.
Fran. Out, atheist, thou profan'st love's deity;
For, false-reporter, I in them have seen
A love that makes a negro of Love's queen;
One that, whenas the sun keeps holiday,
Her beauty clads him in his best array.
Ant. Now truly, shepherd, none such sojourn here;
Please you survey the cell, go in and see;
I'm hearsed[3], and none but sorrow lies with me.

Enter LUCIDA.

Fran. Call you this sorrow's cave?

Enter OCTAVIO *and whispers with* ANTONIO.

Hip. Rather a cell,
Where pleasure grows, and none but angels dwell.
Fran, To what compare shall I compare thee to?
Incomparable beauty's paragon!
Hip. I will compare her beauty to the sun,
For her bright lustre gives the morning light.

[1] Mr. Bullen's conjecture. The quarto reads "shapeless."
[2] Reading suggested by Mr. Bullen in place of the unintelligible words, "let these grave."
[3] Coffined.

Fran. I'll say she is like Cynthia when day's done,
Or lady to the mistress of the night.
Hip. O speak but to me, and I shall be blest.
Fran. One smile would lay my jarring thoughts at rest.

Enter HERMIA.

Her. How now, fair sister? you are hard beset.
Hip. Nymph!
Fran. Goddess!
Hip. Saint! once more, you're both well met.
Fran. O she is fair.
Hip. She fairer.
Fran. Both more fair
Than rocks of pearl, or the chaste evening air.
Hip. Say, sweet, intend you not to fish to-day?
Her. No, shepherds, now fish do not bite but play.
Fran. What time, sweet love, keep fishes when they bite?
Luc. Early i' the morning, or else late at night.
Hip. Come, will you talk with me till time of fishing?
Her. My father, sir, will chide if I be missing.
Oct. The match is made, they're even upon going.
Ant. What should we do?
Oct. Why, as poor parents and dutiful servants should do, run amongst the bushes and catch flies.
Ant. Stay, forward daughters, whither are ye going?
Her. Father, I think these shepherds come a-wooing.
Ant. A-wooing, daughters? ne'er imagine so.
What man so mad to marry grief and woe? [joy.
Fran. Why, where lives sad grief? here's all speaking
Hip. O, I would live and die with such annoy.
Ant. But they are poor, and poverty is despised.
Hip. No, they are fair, beauty is highly prized.
Oct. 'Twill be a match, they are beating the price already.
Ant. They once were fair, sorrow from that hath changed them;

They once knew wealth, but chance hath much estranged them.

Fran. Have they been fair? what, fairer than they are?
Why, 'tis not possible, this heavenly fair
Hath only in itself beauties' exceed,
O then rich, fair, and only selves' exceed!

Ant. Come, daughters, and come, shepherds, if you please,
I'll lead you to the lodge of little ease,
Where I shall feast you with what cheer I may,
Grief shall turn mirth, and keep high holiday.

[*Exeunt* ANTONIO *with* HERMIA *and* LUCIDA. *On* HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO *following*, OCTAVIO *stays them.*

Oct. A word with you; you mean to marry these wenches?

Hip. and Fran. We do.

Oct. And are going to contract yourselves?

Hip. and Fran. We are.

Hip. And what say you to this?

Oct. God speed you; I would have you marry on Saint Luke's day.[1]

Fran. Why?

Oct. Because I would offer[2] at your wedding.

Fran. Come, thou'rt all envy, feed upon thy hate,
This day our quest of love shall terminate.

[*Exeunt* HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO.

Oct. Not if I live; this malady of love
Is grown so strong it will not be driven out.
To see the folly of a doating father!
What toil I had to fashion them to love,
And how 'tis doubled to misfashion them!
They shall not wed, yet how shall I prevent it?
Fearing the event, I have forethought a means.

[1] St. Luke was jocularly regarded as the patron saint of cuckolds. Horn-fair at Charlton was held on St. Luke's day.

[2] Present myself.

Oct. Now to my business; I have a strange habit, and must cut out a humour suitable to it, and humours are picked so near the bone, a man can scarce get humour enough to give a flea his breakfast: but I am a stale ruffian, my habit is brave, and so shall my humour be, and here comes one to give me earnest of it.

Enter ASPERO *and* Boy.

Asp. Send him a letter that I come to kill him.

Boy. 'Twere great valour, but little policy, my lord.

Asp. How long have you been a Machiavellian, boy?

Boy. Ever since I practised to play the knave, my lord;

Asp. Then policy and knavery are somewhat akin?

Boy. As near as penury and gentry; a degree and a half removed, no more.

Asp. How came in the kin 'twixt gentry and penury?

Oct. Shall I tell you, sir?

Asp. First, tell me what thou art?

Oct. Lime and hair; plaster of Paris kneaded together with rye-dough and goats' milk; I am of a hot constitution, wonnot freeze.

Asp. Thy profession?

Oct. A fool or a knave, choose you which.

Boy. Then thou art fit for any gentleman's company.

Oct. True, boy, for your sweet fool and your fine knave are like a pair of upright shoes,[1] that gentlemen wear so long, now of one foot, then of another, till they leave them never a good sole.

Asp. That makes your fool and your knave have such bad souls; but what dost thou seek?

Oct. Mine own undoing, sir,—service.

Asp. Indeed service is like the common law, it undoes any one that follows it long. Canst describe service?

[1] Straight shoes, shoes that will fit either foot. C.f. *The Fleire*, 1615:—"This fellow is like your upright shoe, he will serve either foot."—*Bullen.*

Oct. Yes, 'tis a vacant place, filled up with a complete knave, a miserable pander, or an absolute beggar.

Asp. Your opinion, boy?

Boy. I say a serving-man is an antecedent.

Oct. Because he fits like a cloak-bag?

Boy. He is likewise a nominative case, and goes before his mistress.

Oct. That's when the verb he goes before, his mistress, and he can agree together.

Boy. If not, he turns accusative and follows his master.

Asp. Woo't follow me, fellow?

Oct. To a tavern, an thou woo't pay for my ordinary.[1]

Asp. My business is more serious, thou dost not know me.

Oct. Nor myself neither, so long as I have maintenance.

Asp. Didst never hear of the wars betwixt Venice and Mantua?

Oct. I cut some few of the Mantuans' throats.

Asp. And wert not a knave for't?

Oct. No, I was a Venetian commander, a great man. The reason of this question?

Asp. Dost know the Duke of Venice?

Oct. I am his right hand.

Asp. Woo't do me a message to him?

Oct. What is't?

Asp. Tell him I hate him; my name's Aspero; he has banished my father, usurps his dukedom, and I come to be revenged.

Oct. Antonio's son? 'udsfoot, hast any gold?

Asp. Thy reason?

Oct. 'Shalt be revenged. Give me money, I'll be thy snail and score out a silver path to his confusion.

[1] *i.e.* Pay my score.

Asp. No, my revenge shall be like my father's wrongs, *in aperto;* lend me any honest aid.

Oct. Pox of honesty, it goes a-begging upon crutches; and can get relief out of few but scholars. I shall not kill him?

Asp. I'd be thy death first.

Oct. Yet you say you hate him.

Asp. Equal with my shame.

Oct. Make him chew a bullet then.

Asp. No, though my state with poverty be tainted,
Mine acts and honour shall live still acquainted.

Oct. [*Aside*] True moulded honour: I admire the temper
Of thy mild patience; that not all the wrongs
I laid upon thee can enforce thy spleen
To foul requital: had thy coming ta'en
Any base level, it had cost thy life;
But being free, and full of honour, live;
Thy virtues teach me honour; freely go:
A secret friend's worse than an open foe.—
You are too honest for my attendance; farewell, sir.
[*Exit.*

Asp. And thou too knavish for my employment.
But here comes more company.

Enter FLORIMEL *and* Page.

Flo. Boy, let your attendance wait further off; under this shade I mean to take a sleep.

Page. And may you, madam, like a soldier sleep.

Flo. How, boy, in alarums?

Page. No, lady, but in arms, and you had need of them too; for see the enemy comes down. Shall I sound a parley?

Flo. Peace, wag.

Page. Peace! O coward, offer peace and but two to two of them!

Flo. Boy, dost thou know what gentleman it is?

Page. Gentle madam, no; but he is a man.

Flo. Believe me, boy, he is a proper man.

Page. Man is a proper name to a man, and so he may be a proper man.

Flo. I love him, he's a very proper man.

Page. She loves him for his properties, and indeed many women love men only to make properties of them.

Flo. Pray, gentleman, if no more, tell me where you were born.

Asp. Fair virgin, if so much, no where, some where, any where, where you would have me.

Flo. Faith, I would have it.

Asp. Marry, and you shall have it, lady.

Flo. What shall I have, sir?

Asp. Why, a kiss.

Flo. Nothing else? we courtiers count them trifles, not worth taking.

Asp. Why then, bestow one of me; I'll take it most thankfully.

Flo. I will not stand with you for a trifle, sir; pray where were you born?

Asp. In Italy, but never yet in Venice.

Flo. You may in Venice; gentle sir, adieu. [*Exit.*

Asp. Gentle lady, thrice as much to you.

Page. Farewell, sweet heart. [*Exit.*

Boy. Gad a mercy, bagpudding.[1]

Asp. "You may in Venice; gentle sir, adieu." This begets wonder.

Boy. You're not wise then; what do you take her for?

Asp. Some great woman.

Boy. Some woman great with child. Be ruled; she's a pink.[2] Board her.

Asp. But how? the means?

[1] "A term of contempt derived from a rustic dish, of which we have no very clear conception, but it was probably like our roly-poly puddings." — Wright's *Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English.*

[2] *Pink*, a small boat, was used as a cant term for a loose woman.

Boy. Make but a shot of flattery at her broadside, and she'll strike sail presently.

Asp. Flattery?

Boy. Ay, flattery; women are like fiddlers; speak them fair, they'll play of any instrument.

Asp. Ay, that they can play of.

Boy. She's a botcher that cannot play a little of all.

Asp. And too common that will play too much of any; but come, I'll use means to get her.

Boy. Nay, you must first have means to give her.

Asp. Why, in the course of scholarship the genitive case goes before the dative.

Boy. The grammarians are fools that placed them so; for *in rerum natura* the dative goes before the genitive; you must always give before you can get; lovers are fools, and fools must be liberal.

Asp. Will not women respect a man for his good parts?

Boy. Yes, some few; but all for his good gifts. A gentleman with his good gifts sits at the upper end of the table on a chair and a cushion, when a scholar with his good parts will be glad of a joint-stool in the lobby with the chambermaids.

Asp. I will have good gifts and show myself liberal too, though I beg for't,

Boy. I think that will be the end; for penury has ta'en a lease of your pocket to keep court in this Christmas.

Asp. Well, howsoe'er, she's fair and courteous;
And courteous fair is a fair gift in ladies:
She may be well descended; if she be,
She's fit for love, and why not then for me? [*Exit.*

Boy. An you be not fitted in Venice 'tis strange, for 'tis counted the best flesh-shambles in Italy: but here's no notable coward, that having suffered wrong by a man, seeks to right himself of a woman. [*Exit, following.*

SCENE II.—*The Country between Venice and Mantua.*

Enter HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO, *as* Shepherds, OCTAVIO *in disguise.*

Oct. Look you sir, I am like an Irish beggar and an English burr, will stick close where I find a good nap; I must and will dwell with you.

Fran. What canst do?

Oct. Still[1] aquavitæ, stamp crabs,[2] and make mustard; I can do as much as all the men you keep.

Fran. Prithee, what?

Oct. Why undo you, and twenty could do no more. But business; come, my wits grow rusty for employment.

Fran. Canst keep counsel?

Oct. My mother was a midwife.

Hip. Hast any skill in love?

Oct. I am one of Cupid's agents; have Ovid's *Ars Amandi ad ungues;* know *causam,* and can apply *remedium,* and minister *effectum* to a hair. But why do you ask? have you traversed an action in love's spiritual court?

Fran. Not to dissemble, we have.

Oct. And without dissembling, you'll never come out of it; but tell me true, are you in love already? or have you but desire to be in love?

Fran. Indeed I am in love to be in love.

Hip. And I desire to live in fond desire,
And yet I doubt to touch blind fancy's fire.

Oct. 'Tis good to doubt, but 'tis not good to fear,
Yet still to doubt will at the last prove fear;
Doubt love, 'tis good, but 'tis not good to fear it,
Love hurts them most, that least of all come near it.

Fran. Then to doubt love is the next way to love.

Oct. Doubtless it is, if you misdoubt not love.

[1] *i.e.* Distil.

[2] "Verjuice is made by stamping or pounding the crab apple."—*Fairholt* (Lilly, ii., 274), quoted by *Bullen.*

Hip. Doubt and misdoubt, what difference is there here?

Oct. Yes, much; when men misdoubt, 'tis said they fear.

Fran. But is it good in love to be in doubt?

Oct. No, not in love, doubt then is jealousy:
'Tis good to doubt before you be in love;
Doubt counsels how to shun love's misery.

Fran. Your doubtful counsel counsels us to love.

Oct. To equal love, I like experience speak.

Hip. Experienced lover, you have spoken well.

Oct. Experience-wanting lovers, truth I tell;
Young wits be wise, in love live constant still,
You need nor doubt good hap, nor misdoubt ill.

Enter LUCIDA *and* HERMIA *with angles.*

And see, your discourse has conjured up beauty in the likeness of two country-maids, but you shall not come in the circles of their arms, if I can keep you out.

Fran. These are too mean for love; brother, let's leave them.

Oct. What, speechless? will you make dumb virgins of them?

Hip. Oh, we are sons of a great father.

Oct. So is the sun of Heaven, yet he smiles on the bramble as well as the lily; kisses the cheek of a beggar as lovingly as a gentlewoman, and 'tis good to imitate him, 'tis good.

Her. Say, sister, had we not fine sport to-day?

Luc. We had, if death may be accounted play.

Her. Why, 'tis accounted pleasure to kill fish.

Luc. A pleasure nothing pleasure to the fish.

Her. Yet fishes were created to be killed.

Luc. Cruel creation then, to have lives spilled.

Her. Their bodies being food, maintain our breath.

Luc. What bodies then have we, to live by death?

Her. Come, come, you vainly argue; it is good.

Luc. What, it is good to kill? O God, O God!

Her. If it be sin, then you your self's a sinner.

Luc. I thank proud fortune for't, my woes' beginner.

Oct. 'Foot, are ye not ashamed to stand by like idle ciphers, and such places of account void? and if they had been rich offices, and you poor courtiers, you would have been in them in half the time.

Fran. Though against stomach—

Oct. Nothing against stomach, an you love me.

Hip. Fair maids, if so you be, you are well met.

Her. Shepherds, or be what else you are, well met.

Fran. 'Tis well, if that well met we be to you.

Luc. If not to us, you are unto your selves.

Hip. We did not meet, you saw us come together.

Her. Whate'er we saw, you met ere you came hither.

Fran. We did, we met in kindred, we are brothers.

Luc. So shepherds, we did meet, for we are sisters.

Hip. Then, sisters, let us brothers husbands be.

Her. So, brothers, without our leaves, you well may be.

Fran. Say, we desire to husband it with you,

Luc. Know we desire no husbands such as you.

Hip. A shepherd is an honest trade of life.

Her. Yet shepherd has with honest trade some strife.[1]

Hip. He seldom swears but by his honesty.

Her. So honest men do too as well as he.

Fran. But will you trust a shepherd when he vows?

Luc. No, never; if that his oath be that he loves.

Hip. Yet if I swear, that needs must be mine oath.

Her. Swear not, for we are misbelievers both.

Fran. Let us persuade you to believe we love you.

Luc. First, we entreat you give us time to prove you.

Hip. Take time, meantime we'll praise ye to our powers.

Her. O time, sometime shepherds have idle hours.

Fran. I'll say thy cheek no natural beauty lacks.

[1] The quarto reads, "Yet honest shepherd has with honest trade some strife,"—a probable printer's error.

Luc. Good, if it had been spoke behind our backs.

Hip. I'll say this is the Heaven of heavenly graces.

Her. O Heaven, how they can flatter to our faces.

[*Exeunt* HERMIA *and* LUCIDA.

Fran. Brother, the last is fairest in my eye.

Hip. Ay, but the first, brother, is first in beauty.

Fran. First in your choice, but not in beauty sir.

Oct. [*Aside*] Come ye so near as choice: 'tis time for me to stop, for fear the music runs too far out of tune.—How now, gallants? in dumps?

Fran. No, but in love.

Oct. That's a dump, love's nothing but an Italian dump [1] or a French brawl.[2]

Hip. Methinks 'tis sweeter music.

Oct. An 'twere in tune, I confess it; but you take your parts too low, you are treble courtiers, and will never agree with these country minnikins;[3] the music's too base, never meddle in't.

Fran. Peace, dotard, peace; thy sight of love is done,
Thou canst not see the glory of love's sun:
Spent age with frosty clouds thy sight doth dim,
That thou art blind to see, and apt to sin.

Oct. Is it accounted sin to speak the truth?

Mip. And worse, when age spits poison against youth.

Oct. They do not fit your callings; let them go.

Fran. Yet they are fair: we love; thou art love's foe.

Oct. I am your friend, and wish you from this love.

Hip. Canst thou heave hills? then thou my thoughts may'st move,
But never else.

Oct. Never?

Fran. No, never.

Oct. Stay.

[1] A slow dance.

[2] From *branle*, the French name for the same dance, which was brought from France about the middle of the 16th century.

[3] The treble string in a lute.

Hip. We are bound for love.
Oct. Hate.
Fran. Hinder not our way.
[*Exeunt* HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO.

Oct. Ay, boys; will eagle's eaglets turn to bastards?
Then must I change my vein, and once more prove,
To teach you how to hate as well as love. [*Exit, following.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.—*The Country near Venice.*

Enter FLORIMEL *and* Page.

PAGE. Sweet honey candy madam, if it be no forfeit to tell tales out of Cupid's free school, tell what proficient your lover Aspero proves?

Flo. Now, so love help me, la, a passing weak one and very unready.

Page. The better, for women would have their lovers unready to choose.

Flo. How ready you are to play the knave! But to Aspero.

Page. I do not think but there's good music in him; your tongue harps so much upon his name.

Flo. I shall never forget him.

Page. I'faith, lady, then I know what I know.

Flo. What do you know, I pray?

Page. Marry, that if you never forget him, you shall ever remember him. Was he never in your chamber?

Flo. Yes, but he showed himself the strangest fool. And by my troth, la, I am sorry for't too. I had as good an appetite to maintain discourse—but here a comes. [*Enter* ASPERO.]—If ever I choose a man by the fulness of his calf, or a cock by the crowing—Look, an the bashful fool do not blush already.

Page. You may do well to kiss him, and make him bold, madam.

Flo. Boy, go know what strange gentleman that is?

Asp. 'Slid, what a strange lady's this? Madam, though I seem a stranger to you, I lay with one last night that's well acquainted with you.

Flo. Acquainted with me?

Asp. And knows you, and loves you, and you love him, and have bestowed kind favours of him too.

Flo. I bestow favours! what favours?

Asp. Though 'twere but a trifle, he took it as kindly as some would have done; a kiss.

Flo. Lord, what a while this jest has been a brooding! and it proves but addle, too, now it is hatched.

Asp. 'Tis a pig of your own sow, madam; and I hope your wit will bestow the nursing of it.

Flo. So it had need, I think; 'tis like to have but a dry nurse of yours.

Page. O, dry jest! all the wit in your head will scarce make sippets in't. What! aground, and such a fair landing place? get ashore, or be ranked among fools for ever.

Flo. And faith, is't not a pity such a proper man should keep company with a fool?

Asp. I keep company with none but you, lady.

Flo. You keep mine against my will.

Asp. So do I the fools, I protest; but take away yours, I'll soon shift away the fools.

Page. I have not seen a fool so handsomely shifted in Venice.

Asp. But come, shall the fool and you be friends?

Flo. The fool and I? you're too familiar.

Asp. Why, I hope a fool may be a lady's familiar at all times.

Flo. Come, you're too saucy.

Asp. Indeed, 'tis a fool's part of Joan to be in the sauce afore my lady; otherwise, I am neither fool nor saucy.

Flo. Not, proud sir?

Asp. Not, coy lady; come, why should your tongue

make so many false fires that never come from your heart? you love me, I know you love me; your spirit, your look, your countenance bewrays it.

Flo. You jest.

Asp. In earnest you do, and you shall know't in earnest too: lend me this jewel.

Flo. Jewel? away, you sharking[1] companion.

Asp. How?

Flo. Wandering stravagant, that like a drone flies humming from one land to another!

Page. 'Slight, an thou hast any wit, now show her thy sting.

Flo. And lightest upon every dairy-maid and kitchen-wench.

Asp. And now and then on a lady's lip, as—

Flo. You did of mine, you would say; and I am heart-sorry you can say it; and when by your buzzing flattery you have sucked the smallest favour from them, you presently make wing for another.

Asp. Marry, buzz.

Flo. Double the zard, and take the whole meaning for your labour.

Page. The buzzard's wit's not so bald yet, I trow.

Asp. A word in your ear, madam; the buzzard will anger you.

Flo. With staying, you do.

Asp. With going, I shall.

Flo. Away.

Asp. Ay, away; never entreat, 'tis too late: if you send after me, I will not come back; if you write to me, I will not answer; drown your eyes in tears, I will not wipe them; break your heart with sighs, I will not pity you: never look, signs cannot move me; if you speak, 'tis too late; if you entreat, 'tis bootless; if you hang upon me, 'tis needless: I offered love, and you scorned it; my absence will be your death, and I am proud on't. [*Exit.*

[1] Thieving.

Flo. Is he gone, boy?

Page. Yes, faith, madam.

Flo. Clean out of sight?

Page. And out of mind too, or else you have not the mind of a true woman.

Flo. Thou read'st a false comment, boy; call him again; yet do not, my heart shall break ere it bend.

Page. Or else it holds not the true temper of womanhood; but faith, tell me, madam, do you love him?

Flo. As a Welshman doth toasted cheese; I cannot dine without him; he's my pillow, I cannot sleep quietly without him; my rest, I cannot live without him.

Page. O that he knew it, lady,

Flo. He does; he would never have left me else. He does.

Page. You called him fool, but methinks he proves a physician, has found the disease of your liver by the complexion of your looks; but see, he returns.

Re-enter ASPERO, *as meditating.*

Flo. And now, methinks, I loathe him more than I loved him; go run for Hortensio my guardian, bid him come armed; there's intent of treason, tell him.

Page. My lady cannot choose but dance well, she's so full of pretty changes. [*Exit.*

Flo. I wonder you dare come in my sight, considering the wrong you did me.

Asp. I came I confess, but with no intent to see you I protest, and that shall be manifested by the shortness of my stay.

Flo. 'Tis too long, an 'twere shorter than 'tis:—[*Aside*] will he not court me? not? nor speak to me neither?—Nay, never ask pardon, 'tis too late, we shall ha' you come to my window one o' these mornings with music; but do not, my patience is too much out of tune; out of my sight, I hate thee worse than I loathe painting; I hate thee, out of my sight.

Asp. Enough; will you be a quiet woman yet? will you speak before my resolve takes strength? will you? do but say you are sorry, I ask no mends but a kiss, kindly, come: shall I ha't?

Flo. I'll kiss a toad first.

Asp. You will remember this another time; a toad! you will: I know thou lov'st me, and I see the pride of thy humour; I do, and thou shalt know I do; half an hour hence we shall have you weeping on your knees, with "O my Aspero, would I had died when I rejected thee!" but do, weep till I pity thee; a toad! I'll make thee creep on thy knees for a kiss.

Flo. You will?

Asp. Thy bare knees; I will,—and go without it too.

Flo. Out-humoured? O, I would sell my part of immortality.

Asp. But to touch my hand, thou would'st, I know thou would'st.

Flo. O, how spleen swells me! Help, Hortensio! Creep a[1] my knees? Hortensio!

Enter HORTENSIO *and* ASSISTANCE.

Hort. How fares my beauteous charge? weeping, lady?
The law shall fetch red water from his veins
That hath drawn blood of your eyes; is this the traitor?

Asp. Traitor! in thy disloyal throat thou liest.

Page. O monstrous, a wishes you choked, my lord.

Hort. How? choked?

Page. Ay, choked; for a wishes the traitor in your throat; and he's a very small traitor that is not able to choke a wiser man than your lordship.

Hort. Down with him.

Page. Ay, down with him, if he stick in your throat, and spare not.

Flo. Do not kill him; though he deserves death, yet do not kill him, only disweapon him; so.

[1] On.

Hort. But, madam—

Flo. I will not hear him; keep him; but keep him safe on your lives; if he get away or miscarry in prison, as I am heir of Venice, I'll have your heads for't.

[HORTENSIO *and* ASSISTANCE *bind* ASPERO.

Hort. I warrant you, madam, if irons will hold him.

Flo. Fie, fie, with a cord? Here, bind him with my scarf, that will hold; and yet stand away, I'll do't myself; I cannot trust him with you, lest you should let him sometime 'scape free; besides, you cannot use him according to the quality of his offence, and, because I'll glory in his bondage, my chamber shall be his prison; let him have neither light, meat nor drink, but what I provide him myself.

Hort. Your will's a law; we obey it, madam.

Asp. She knows me sure; well, though my joys be thrall,
My comfort's this, a speedy death ends all.

[*Exeunt* ASPERO, HORTENSIO, *and* ASSISTANCE.

Flo. O, you are not gone, then.

Page. Here's a new kind of courting, never seen before, I think.

Flo. He would anger me.

Page. Nay, you would take a course to anger him first, I think.

Flo. Should I have let him go (as I could no other way detain him in modesty), and he had set his love on some other, 'twould have fretted my heart-strings asunder.

Page. Why did you set him so light then?

Flo. Not for any hate, but in pride of my humour.

Page. Why did you command him close prisoner to your chamber?

Flo. That I may feed mine eye with the sight of him, and be sure no other beauty can rob me of his company: I will ha't all, I will not lose an inch of him. And in this I but imitate our Italian dames, who cause their friends to clap their jealous husbands in prison, that if

they have occasion to use them within forty weeks and a day, they may surely know where to find them. [*Exit.*

Page. If I had any knavery in me, as I am all honesty, I could make a notable scene of mirth between these two amorists. [*Exit, following.*

SCENE II.—*The Country between Venice and Mantua.*

Enter ANTONIO *with a net.*

Ant. Early sorrow, art got up so soon?
What, ere the sun ascendeth in the East?
O what an early waker art thou grown!
But cease discourse, and close unto thy work;
Under this drooping myrtle will I sit,
And work awhile upon my corded net,
And, as I work, record my sorrows past,
Asking old Time, how long my woes shall last.
And first,—but stay, alas! what do I see?
Moist gum, like tears, drop from this mournful tree;
And see, it sticks like birdlime; 'twill not part;
Sorrow is even such birdlime at my heart.
Alas, poor tree, dost thou want company?
Thou dost, I see't, and I will weep with thee;
Thy sorrows make thee dumb, and so shall mine,
It shall be tongueless, and so seem like thine.
Thus will I rest my head unto thy bark,
Whilst my sighs tell my sorrows; hark, tree, hark.

Enter HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO, *still as* Shepherds.

Fran. Fie, fie, how heavy is light love in me!
Hip. How slow runs swift desire!
Fran. This leaden air,
This ponderous feather, merry melancholy.
Hip. This passion which but in passion
Hath not his perfect shape.

Fran. And sleepless[1] love
Hath in his watch of love o'erslept himself.
Hip. Then, sleepy wakers, leave this grove;[2] let's wander,
And wait the ascension of beauty's wonder.
But stay, a man striving 'twixt life and death!
Fran. Nay, then 'tis so, my heavenly love's gone by,
And struck him dead with her love-darting eye.
Hip. If speech-bereaving love will let thee speak,
Then, speechless man, speak with the tongue of love,
And tell me, if thou saw'st not Cynthia
Seeking Endymion in these flowery dales.
Ant. Dales for Endymion and fair Cynthia fit,
But never heavenly goddess blest this grove;
These woods are consecrate to grief, not love.
Fran. Out, atheist, thou profan'st love's deity;
For, false-reporter, I in them have seen
A love that makes a negro of Love's queen;
One that, whenas the sun keeps holiday,
Her beauty clads him in his best array.
Ant. Now truly, shepherd, none such sojourn here;
Please you survey the cell, go in and see;
I'm hearsed[3], and none but sorrow lies with me.

Enter LUCIDA.

Fran. Call you this sorrow's cave?

Enter OCTAVIO *and whispers with* ANTONIO.

Hip. Rather a cell,
Where pleasure grows, and none but angels dwell.
Fran, To what compare shall I compare thee to?
Incomparable beauty's paragon!
Hip. I will compare her beauty to the sun,
For her bright lustre gives the morning light.

[1] Mr. Bullen's conjecture. The quarto reads "shapeless."
[2] Reading suggested by Mr. Bullen in place of the unintelligible words, "let these grave."
[3] Coffined.

Fran. I'll say she is like Cynthia when day's done,
Or lady to the mistress of the night.
Hip. O speak but to me, and I shall be blest.
Fran. One smile would lay my jarring thoughts at rest.

Enter HERMIA.

Her. How now, fair sister? you are hard beset.
Hip. Nymph!
Fran. Goddess!
Hip. Saint! once more, you're both well met.
Fran. O she is fair.
Hip. She fairer.
Fran. Both more fair
Than rocks of pearl, or the chaste evening air.
Hip. Say, sweet, intend you not to fish to-day?
Her. No, shepherds, now fish do not bite but play.
Fran. What time, sweet love, keep fishes when they bite?
Luc. Early i' the morning, or else late at night.
Hip. Come, will you talk with me till time of fishing?
Her. My father, sir, will chide if I be missing.
Oct. The match is made, they're even upon going.
Ant. What should we do?
Oct. Why, as poor parents and dutiful servants should do, run amongst the bushes and catch flies.
Ant. Stay, forward daughters, whither are ye going?
Her. Father, I think these shepherds come a-wooing.
Ant. A-wooing, daughters? ne'er imagine so.
What man so mad to marry grief and woe? [joy.
Fran. Why, where lives sad grief? here's all speaking
Hip. O, I would live and die with such annoy.
Ant. But they are poor, and poverty is despised.
Hip. No, they are fair, beauty is highly prized.
Oct. 'Twill be a match, they are beating the price already.
Ant. They once were fair, sorrow from that hath changed them;

They once knew wealth, but chance hath much estranged them.

Fran. Have they been fair? what, fairer than they are?
Why, 'tis not possible, this heavenly fair
Hath only in itself beauties' exceed,
O then rich, fair, and only selves' exceed!

Ant. Come, daughters, and come, shepherds, if you please,
I'll lead you to the lodge of little ease,
Where I shall feast you with what cheer I may,
Grief shall turn mirth, and keep high holiday.

[*Exeunt* ANTONIO *with* HERMIA *and* LUCIDA. *On* HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO *following*, OCTAVIO *stays them.*

Oct. A word with you; you mean to marry these wenches?

Hip. and Fran. We do.

Oct. And are going to contract yourselves?

Hip. and Fran. We are.

Hip. And what say you to this?

Oct. God speed you; I would have you marry on Saint Luke's day.[1]

Fran. Why?

Oct. Because I would offer[2] at your wedding.

Fran. Come, thou'rt all envy, feed upon thy hate,
This day our quest of love shall terminate.

[*Exeunt* HIPPOLITO *and* FRANCISCO.

Oct. Not if I live; this malady of love
Is grown so strong it will not be driven out.
To see the folly of a doating father!
What toil I had to fashion them to love,
And how 'tis doubled to misfashion them!
They shall not wed, yet how shall I prevent it?
Fearing the event, I have forethought a means.

[1] St. Luke was jocularly regarded as the patron saint of cuckolds. Horn-fair at Charlton was held on St. Luke's day.

[2] Present myself.

And here it lies; swaggering becomes not age;
Now like the fox, I'll go a pilgrimage.
Frolic, my boys, I come to mar your sport;
Your country music must not play at court.
But first I'll write back to Hortensio
For apprehension of young Aspero.
They have not yet dined, I'll bid myself their guest:
Religion beg? a fashion in request. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Venice. A Chamber in the* Duke's *Palace.*

Enter ASPERO *and* Boy.

Asp. Art sure she hates me, boy?

Boy. More than her death. I have been in her bosom,[1] sir; and this day she intends your execution.

Asp. My execution! the reason of her hate?

Boy. Her humour; nothing but a kind of strange cross humour in that you rejected her love.

Asp. That's not capital.

Boy. Not to cross a great one's humour? no treason more: great personages' humours are puritans; they'll as lief endure the devil as soon as a cross; and can away with him better.

Asp. I will submit, ask pardon on my knee.

Boy. Is your proud humour come down, i' faith, your high humour that would not stoop an inch of the knees? I'll help't up again, an't be but to uphold the jest. I must bring her as low ere I have done. O base, I would rather lay my neck under the axe of her hate, than my sport under the feet of her humour; but be counselled, I'll teach you to prevent both; and perchance, make her upstart humour stoop gallant, too.

Asp. I'll hold[2] thee my best jewel, an thou dost.

[1] Compare *Julius Cæsar*, v. i. 7: "Tut, I am in their bosoms."
[2] Wager.

Boy. And pawn me as poor lords do their jewels, too, will you not? receive[1] me, you shall counterfeit yourself dead.

Asp. The life of that jest?

Boy It may be, she dissembles all this while; loves you, and puts on this show of hate of purpose to humble you: she may, and I believe—

Asp. What?

Boy. That most intelligencers are knaves, and some women dissemblers; being thought dead (as let me alone to buzz that into the credulous ear of the court) if she have any sparks of love, they'll kindle and flame bright through the cinders of her heart.

Asp. If not?

Boy. If not, 'twill be a means for your escape: I'll say you requested, at your death, to be buried at your native city; and what courtier, if a Christian, can deny that?

Asp. I am all thine, my humour's thy patient.

Boy. And if I do not kill it, I am not worthy to be your physician. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.— *The same.*

Enter FLORIMEL *and* Page.

Page. Ay, marry, Lady; why, now you credit your sex! a woman's honour or humour should be like a ship under sail; split her keel ere she vail.[2]

Enter Boy.

Flo. I'll split my heart, ere my humour strike sail. Here comes his page. How now, boy? how doth your master?

Boy. Well, madam, he.

Flo. Well?

[1] Understand. [2] Lower the colours.

Boy. Very well.

Flo. Where is he?

Boy. Where none of your proud sex will ever come, I think: in heaven.

Flo. Is he dead?

Boy. See, madam; and seeing blush; and blushing shame, that your ungentle humour should be the death of so good and generous a spirit.

[*Discovers* ASPERO *lying on a table, and seemingly dead.*

Flo. My Aspero dead!

Boy. See, madam, what a mutation.

Flo. I see too much; and curse my proud humour that was the cause of it. Aspero, kind soul; proud sullen Florimel; disdainful humour, that in one minute hast eternally undone me: I would not kiss the living substance, that being dead, dote on thy picture.[1] O, I loved thee ever with my soul! O let me kiss this shroud of beauty! I would not accept thee living, that being dead, on my knees adore thee; could kisses recover thee, I would dwell on thy lips, kneel till my knees grew to the ground, dear, gentle Aspero.

She that procured thy death, will die with thee;
And crave no heaven, but still to lie with thee.

[ASPERO *starts up.*

Asp. I take you at your word, lady. Nay, never recant, I have witness on't now; is your proud humour come down? could you not have said so at first, and saved me a labour of dying?

Flo. Lives Aspero?

Asp. Live, quotha? 'sfoot, what man would be so mad to lie in his cold grave alone, and may lie in a warm bed with such a beautiful wife as this will be? have I ta'en your humour napping, i'faith?

Flo. Am I o'erreached?

Asp. In your humour, madam, nothing else; and I am as proud on't.

[1] Image.

Flo. Do not flout me; an you do, I shall grow into my humour again.

Asp. In jest?

Flo. In earnest I shall, and then I know what I know.

Asp. You may; but an you do, I shall die again.

Flo. In jest?

Asp. Nay, in earnest, madam, and then—

Flo. No more; thou hast driven me clean out of conceit with my humour. I love thee, I confess it: 'shalt be my husband, I'll live with thee; thou art my life, and I'll die with thee.

What more I mean is coated in my look:
If thou accept'st it, swear.

Asp. I kiss the book.

Flo. Boy, run to the master of my gondola, and will[1] him attend me after supper at the garden stairs; I mean to take the evening air, tell him.

Page. It shall be done, madam. [*Exit.*

Flo. Nay, if I say the word, it shall be done, Aspero.

Boy. Look to yourself, my lord; I lay my life my lady means to steal you away to night.

Asp. Away? I'll call Hortensio, I'll not be accessory to your felony, madam.

Enter HORTENSIO *with a letter, and* ASSISTANCE.

Flo. The fool comes without calling.

Ass. [*To* HORT.] You shall know him by these signs.

Hort. Good figure, very good figure; for as the house is found out by the sign, so must this traitor be scented out by the token; up with the first sign, good Assistance.

Ass. A proper man without a beard.

Hort. How, a proper man without a beard? we shall scarce find that sign in all Venice: for the properness of a man lives altogether in the fashion of his beard; good Assistance, the next.

Ass. Fair-spoken and well-conditioned.

Hort. More strange: you shall have many proper men fair-spoken, but not one amongst twenty well-conditioned: but soft; this should be the house, by the sign; I must pick it out of him by wit.

Flo. As good say steal, my lord: what marrow-bone of wit is your judgment going to pick now?

Hort. I must, like a wise justice of peace, pick treason out of this fellow.

Flo. Treason?

Hort. Ay, treason, madam · know you this hand?

Flo. My royal father's.

Hort. Then, whilst you and your father's letters talk together, let me examine this fellow: are you a proper man without a beard?

Asp. My properness, sir, contents me; for my beard, indeed that was bitten the last great frost, and so were a number of justices of the peace besides.

Hort. 'Tis rumoured about the court that your name is Aspero.

Asp. I am called Aspero.

Hort. Son to the Duke of Mantua that was?

Asp. The Duke of Mantua's son that is.

Hort. Then the Duke of Mantua has a traitor to his son; lay hands of him, and to close prison with him.

Flo. Can he be closer than in my custody?

Hort. I do not think so, madam; but your father has imposed the trust upon me.

Flo. And dare not you trust me?

Hort. With my head, if you were my wife; but not with my profit, if you were my mother: will you along, sir?

Asp. With all my heart, sir. See what your humour's come to now! I go, my lord, as willingly as a slave from the galleys: for as I shall have a stronger prison, so I shall be sure of a kinder and a wiser jailor.

Flo. Do you observe how he flouts you, my lord? That I had been his keeper but one night longer! But

keep him close: if he escape (though against thy will) as I am a maid—

Hort. A maid against your will.

Flo. —'shalt pay as dear for't as thou did'st for thy office.

Hort. If he 'scape, hang me.

[*Exeunt* HORTENSIO *and* ASSISTANCE *with* ASPERO.

Flo. I shall see thee hanged, if he do not: treason! I may thank my peevish humour for't.

Enter Page.

Page. Madam, the gondola is ready.

Flo. Thou bring'st physic when the patient's dead, boy; our jest's turned earnest.

Page. Is a[1] dead in earnest?

Flo. As good, or rather worse; he's buried quick.[2]

Page. O madam, many a good thing has been buried quick and survived again; I would be buried quick myself, an I might choose my grave.

Flo. He's buried in close prison, boy; he's known for the Duke of Mantua's son, an by my father's letters attached for a traitor.

Page. Good gentleman, an I be not sorry for him: who is his keeper?

Flo. The testy ass Hortensio.

Page. 'Udsfoot, let's enlarge[3] him.

Flo. Not possible, boy.

Page. Not possible? 'tis: we'll cozen his keeper.

Flo. We cannot.

Page. Cannot! we can: your father made a lord of him; but be ruled by me, his daughter shall make a fool of him. You are not the first woman has made a fool of a wiser lord than he is.

Flo. Shall he be cozened?

Page. As palpably as at the lottery. My brains are in labour of the stratagem already. [*Exeunt.*

[1] He. [2] Alive. [3] Set him at large.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.—*The Country between Venice and Mantua.*

Enter ANTONIO, FRANCISCO, HIPPOLITO, HERMIA, LUCIDA, *and* OCTAVIO *disguised.*

ANT. Sons of Octavio, if your princely thoughts
Can stoop to such mean beauty, from this hand
Receive your wives; but should the duke your father—

Fran. Fear not, old man, he was the means that breathed
This spirit into us.

Hip. Wooed us to this course.
But should he prove apostate, deny
Love which he first enforced us to profess,
So firm are our inseparate affections,
To win our loves we'd lose the names of sons.

Oct. Your father thanks you; but, hot-sprighted youths,
Take counsel from experience, ere ye tie
The Gordian knot which none but Heaven can loose.
Crave his consent: when an imperial hand
Shakes a weak shed, the building cannot stand.

Fran. Not stand? it shall: not Jove himself can ruin
The ground-works of our love.

Oct. Not Jove?

Hip. Not Jove,
Should a speak thunder; then go boldly on,
Our love admits no separation.

Oct. Then to mine office: in the sight of Heaven
Your love is chaste.
Fran. and Hip. As innocence' white soul.
Oct. And yours.
Her. and Luc. And ours.
Oct. Then lend me all your hands,
Whilst thus a father's tongue forbids the banns.
[*Discovers himself.*
Forgetful boys! but most audacious traitor,
That durst in thought consent to wrong thy prince,
Out of my sight; no land that calls me lord
Shall bear a weight so hateful as thyself:
Live ever banished. If (three days expired)
Thou or these lustful strumpets—
Hip. Father!
Oct. Boys,
If you be mine, show't in obedience:
—If (three days past) you live within my dukedom,
Thee as a slave I'll doom unto the galleys,
And these thy brats as common prostitutes
Shall dry their lustful veins in the burdello.[1]
Come, boys, to court; he that first gave you lives,
Will to your births provide you equal wives.
Fran. They have our loves.
Hip. Our oaths.
Fran. Our hearts and hands.
Oct. Tut, lovers' oaths, like toys[2] writ down in sands,
Are soon blown o'er; contracts are common wiles
To entangle fools; Jove himself sits and smiles
At lovers' perjuries.[3] Bawds, strumpets, hence!

[1] Ital. *bordello*, brothel.
[2] Trivial matters.
[3] One of the many allusions to Ovid's lines, *Ars Am.*, ll. 633-4:—
Jupiter ex alto perjuria ridet amantum,
Et jubet Aeolios irrita ferre notos.
Shakespeare, as everybody knows, has alluded to this passage of Ovid's in *Rom. & Jul.* ii. 2.—*Bullen.*

My bosom's charged, give way to violence:
Come, do not mind them.

[*Exeunt* ANTONIO, HERMIA, *and* LUCIDA.

Fran. How? not mind them, father?
When in your court you courted us to love
You read another lecture: women then
Were angels.

Oct. True, but that was before angels
Had power to make them devils; they were then
Fiends to themselves, and angels unto men.
When upon Po thou find'st a coal-black swan,
Thou'st found a woman constant to a man.

Fran. And not afore?

Oct. Never afore.

Hip. Your tongue
Unspeaks your former speech.

Oct. It doth; new themes
Must have new change of rhetoric; all streams
Flow not one way; when I spake like a lover,[1]
It was to break you from your soldier's humour;
Having made you lovers, I, like envy, speak
To make you hate love; Art still strives to break
Bad to make better.

Hip. and Fran. You have your wish.

Oct. Then onward to the court,
Make use of love as school-boys do of sport. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Outside* ASPERO'S *Prison.*

Enter FLORIMEL *and* Page.

Flo. Call out the jailor, boy—yet do not; hast got a beard like Hortensio?

[1] This line reads in the original, "Flow not alike one way; when I spake like a lover." I have no doubt the wholly unnecessary word "alike" has crept in by an error of the press, the compositor's eye having glanced at the word *like* in the later part of the line.

Page. Yes, madam, I have got his hair; if I could come as easily by his wit!

Flo. Would'st rob him of his wit?

Page. If I should, he could not hang me for't: 'tis not worth thirteen-pence halfpenny. But what shall I with it?

Flo. Put it on, boy.

Page. That shall I, madam. O forward age, I am a man already: how do you like me, lady?

Flo. Very ill, and my plot worse.

Page. Then leave 't off. If you be grounded [1] in the plot, you will but mar the comedy.

Flo. I purposed thou, in the habit of Hortensio, should'st under pretence of removing Aspero to a new prison, have freed him out of the old one.

Page. Tut, I can tell you a trick worth two of that; madam, your ear: take some care in the managing, and let me alone to prepare it. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—ASPERO'S *Prison.*

Enter ASPERO *and* Boy.

Boy. 'Udsfoot, break prison, my lord, 'tis but swimming the river.

Asp. Break prison? 'twere both dishonour to my name, and treason to my love; what benefit were 't for me to free my body, and leave my heart in bondage? I'll die, ere I'll harbour a disloyal thought.

Boy. It bears no relish of disloyalty: being in prison, you live as far from love as liberty: being abroad you may by letters, or a thousand means purchase her company, and compass your content.

Asp. 'Shalt be my lawyer, boy, and counsel me.

[1] Run aground.

Boy. I'll look for my fee, then.

Asp. If thy counsel prospers.

Boy. That's an exception lawyers never respect; but come, my lord, leap; as we have risen together, we'll fall together.

Enter HORTENSIO, FLORIMEL, *and* Page.

Asp. Blame me not, love.

Boy. 'Udsfoot, your jailor, my lord.

Asp. Am I prevented?

Boy. Yes faith, there had been a counsellor's fee cast away now.

Hort. You have heard his usage, lady, seen his lodging, and if it please you, you both may and shall confer with him.

Flo. Prithee call him.

Boy. My lord, your keeper hath brought a lady or two to see you.

Asp. To see me? why, am I turned monster? doth he take money to show me? what doth a take a-piece, trow?

Flo. Why, how now, gallant, not gone yet?

Asp. Not, I thank you, lady, and yet I was near 't.

Hort. How do you, man?

Asp. Musty for want of airing.

Flo. We'll have you hanged out i' the fresh air one of these mornings.

Asp. You'd be glad to take me in, then.

Flo. Yes, when you had hanged abroad a little: but my Lord Hortensio (for I think I must be your lady when all's done) what sport? I would be merry a-purpose to make him mad: the room's private and fit for any exercise.

Page. 'Udsfoot, to her; can a woman offer fairer for't?

Hort. Why, shall we go to span-counter,[1] madam?

[1] A game similar to marbles.

Page. To span-counter! best ask her an she'll go to quoits.

Flo. No, I love some stirring exercise; my body's conditioned like the sun, it would never be out of motion.

Hort. I have't, i'faith; when I was student in Padua, we used a most ingenious pastime.

Flo. The name, my lord?

Hort. I cannot give it a name equal to the merit. 'Tis vulgarly called blindman's-buff.

Page. Blindman's-buff? ha, ha, ha!

Hort. Do you laugh at it?

Flo. At the happiness of your wit, my lord, that you should hit upon that sport, which of all other I delight in.

Hort. Will you hear an apology I made in the commendation of it?

Flo. We'll have the thing itself, first; and as we like that, we'll hear your apology after. Who shall be hood-winked first?

Page. Who but the author?

Hort. I, I, none shall be blind but I; help off with my gown, boy.

Page. What shall we have to blind him?

Flo. My scarf: take my scarf, my lord.

Page. There's a simple favour for you.

Hort. And most fit, for indeed nothing blinds lovers sooner than ladies' favours. But who shall blind me?

Flo. Marry, that will I, my lord; let me alone to blind you.

Hort. Good again; for who should blind men but beauteous women? Come, sweet madam.

Flo. But how if you take me? as I know that will be your aim. [*Binds her scarf over his eyes.*

Hort. If I take you prisoner, madam, you must either be hood-winked yourself, or give your conqueror a kiss for your ransom.

Flo. An easy ransom; I'll not be prisoner long, if a kiss will enlarge me. [*They play at blindman's-buff.*

Page. Lord, what scambling[1] shift has he made for a kiss, and cannot get it neither; a little higher, so, so, so; are you blind, my lord?

Hort. As a purblind poet: have amongst you, blind harpers.[2]

Flo. Methinks he looks for all the world like god Cupid.

Page. Take heed of his dart, madam, he comes upon you.

Flo. He cannot come too fast. O I am taken prisoner.

Hort. Your ransom's but a kiss.

Flo. Is that your law of arms?

Hort. Yes, madam; but I'll take it on your lips.

Flo. My lips, like faithful treasurers, shall see it discharged.

Hort. And here are my honest receivers to take it.

[*The* Page *puts his slipper to* HORTENSIO'S *lips; he kisses it.*

Flo. Am I freed now?

Hort. As if you had served seven years for't; sweet kiss, rare lip!

Page. Has she not a sweet breath, my lord?

Hort. As perfume.

Page. And a soft lip?

Hort. And smooth as velvet; I could scarce discern it from velvet: I'd pawn my office for the fellow on't, madam.

Page. Here.

Flo. [*Aside.*] Here, Aspero, on with this beard and gown: I think he follows me by the scent. His hat, so.—A narrow miss, i'faith, my lord!

Hort. Gone, madam.

Flo. Even upon going. [*Aside.*] One of you counterfeit my voice,—There, I deceived you, my lord.

Hort. Have you deceived me, madam?

[1] Scrambling.

[2] The expression, "As blind as a harper" was a common one. A tract of Martin Parker's is entitled "The Poet's Blind Man's bough, or Have among you my blind Harpers," 1641.—*Bullen.*

Flo. Not yet, but I will an you look not the better to't. [*Aside.*] Busy him till you think we are out of the court, and then follow us: you shall find us at the south port.[1]—Now or never, my lord.

[*Exeunt* FLORIMEL *and* ASPERO.

Hort. Why then 'twill never be, lady.

Boy. Here.

Hort. Where?

Boy. Here.

Hort. 'Scaped again?

Page. [*Aside.*] She's 'scaped indeed, my lord; you may cast your cap after her, for I see you can do no good upon her.

Hort. What, have I catched you?

Page. Kiss her and let her go.

Hort. King's truce till I breathe a little.

Page. [*Aside.*] And you had need so, for I think you are almost out of breath; if you be not, you shall be, and that's as good; but breathe and spare not.

Re-enter ASPERO *in* HORTENSIO'S *Gown, disguised, with* FLORIMEL *and* ASSISTANCE *on the upper stage.*

Asp. Did you ever converse with a more stranger dissolute, madam?

Flo. Peremptory Jack![2] Jailor, as you respect your office, lay special watch that none of what degree soever have access to him.

Asp. Without me?

Ass. Or your signet.

Asp. Signet me no signets; your goldsmith's shop is like your swan's nest, has a whole brood of signets, and all of a feather; and amongst many one may be like another. Let none enter upon the stage where Aspero plays the madman, without Hortensio.

[1] Gate.

[2] A term of contempt. Compare Shakespeare, 1 *Henry IV.*, III., iii., 99:—"The prince is a Jack."

Ass. Is he mad, my lord?

Asp. As the lord that gave all to his followers, and begged more for himself.

Flo. If he call for me, tell him I scorn him.

Asp. If he counterfeit my voice—as mad fellows will counterfeit great men's hands, and their tongues too—rate him for't, threaten him with the whip.

Flo. But come not at him.

Asp. If he call for meat, promise him fair.

Flo. But give him none.

Ass. If for light?

Flo. He may fire the house, let him have none.

Asp. If he chafe, laugh.

Flo. If he rail, sing.

Asp. If he speak fair, flout him.

Flo. Do anything to vex him.

Asp. But nothing to content him; you hear my charge, as you respect your office, regard it.

Ass. I warrant you, my lord, let me alone, an we knew not how to abuse a prisoner, we were not worthy to be a jailor. [*Exeunt.*

[*Blindman's-buff is renewed on the lower stage.*

Page. Are you in breath, my lord?

Hort. As a brewer's horse, and as long-winded; look to yourself, madam, I come upon you.

Boy. I am ready for you, sir. O for a bulrush to run a tilt at' s nose!

Page. A fair miss, i' faith.

Hort. I'll mend it next course, you shall see.

Page. In the corner of the left hand; 'udsfoot, 'ware shins, my lord.

Hort. Madam?

Boy. Here.

Hort. Where? [Boy *throws him down.*

Help me up, madam.

Boy. O strange! cannot you get up without help? here's my glove, but come no nearer, as you love me.

Hort. I do love you, madam.

Boy. O blind love!

Hort. True, madam; your beauty has made me blind.

Page. Indeed, love's sons like spaniels are all born blind.

Hort. But they will see.

Boy. Not till they be nine days old, my lord.

Hort. But will you give me the fingers that hold this glove, madam?

Boy. And the whole body to pleasure you, my lord; but let me go a little.

Hort. I will not loose you yet, lady.

Boy. But you shall, my lord; hist, then keep me still.

[*He fastens the glove to a post.*

Page. Faith, let go, my lord, for she grows sullen, and you had as good talk to a post, and as good answer 'twould make you. [*Exeunt* Page *and* Boy.

Hort. [*Before the post*]. Nay but, dear madam, do but answer me may I presume, upon my knees I beg it, but to take a favour from your sweet lips, shall I? 'las, I am not the first man that love has blinded. May I presume? I would be loth to offend your mild patience so much as with an unreverend touch: speak: if I shall reap the harvest of my honest desires, make me blest in proposing the time when; what, not a word? are you displeased? or shall I take your silence for a consent? shall I? speak; or if modesty lock in your syllables, seal my assurance with a kiss: not? neither? shall I have neither your word nor your bond? nay, then I must make bold with modesty: by this kiss, madam. [*Removes the scarf from his eyes.*] O my hard fortune, have I made suit to a post all this while? what block but I would have been so senseless? my excuse is, 'twas but to make my lady sport: and, madam! how? lady, madam, boy! madam, Aspero! But whist, I have the conceit, 'twas excellent in my lady, and I applaud it; suppose my lady and her prisoner had an intent of private business in the next room, was it not

better in her to blind me, than I should, as gentlemen ushers (cases so standing), have blinded myself? again, I applaud her, and adore my stars that made me rather a blind than a seeing door-keeper: shall I interrupt them? no: madam! they have not done yet, sure they have not. What have we here, a bass viol? though I cannot tickle the minnikin within, I'll (though it be somewhat base) give them a song without, and the name of the ditty shall be "The Gentleman Usher's Voluntary."

[*Sings*] Peace, peace, peace, make no noise,
Pleasure and fear lie sleeping.
End, end, end your idle toys,
Jealous eyes will be peeping.
Kiss, kiss, and part, though not for hate, for pity;
Ha' done ha' done, ha' done, for I ha' done my ditty.

And if you have not done now, too, let me be as base as my fiddle, if I rouse you not: madam, for shame, what do you mean to make of me? How? 'sfoot? what have you made of me already? all gone? Jailor?

Re-enter ASSISTANCE *above.*

Ass. How now, who calls?

Hort. Why, saucy knave, 'tis I.

Ass. You! what you?

Hort. A single U; I came in double, but I thank them, they are gone out, and left me here a single—

Ass. Fool, and so I leave you.

Hort. Knave, I am Hortensio; I charge thee let me out.

Ass. Fool, you lie; you are Aspero, and I have charge to keep you in.

Hort. From whom?

Ass. From my Lord Hortensio.

Hort. 'Sfoot, knave, I tell thee I am he; an thou wilt not believe me, trust thine eyes, come in and see.

Ass. 'Twill not serve your turn. I like a whole skin

better than a pinked[1] one: content yourself to-night, and in the morning I'll tell you more.

Hort. Where's my lady? send her hither.

Ass. She's busy with my Lord Hortensio; but if you have any use for a woman, I'll send you one of the laundresses: fare you well, sir, be content, you shall want nothing of anything you have.

Hort. Hortensio gone out! and my lady busy with Hortensio? I am gulled, palpably gulled: whilst I like a block stood courting the post, Aspero is in my apparel escaped. Villains! traitors! open the door, the duke's abused, his daughter's fled: I proclaim ye all traitors that hinder me in the pursuit.

Ass. O for a reasonable audience to applaud this scene of merriment: I'll go call my lady and my Lord Hortensio. [*Exit.*

Hort. Blindman's-buff? I have buffed it fairly, and mine own gullery grieves me not half so much as the duke's displeasure. Jailor! not a word? Jailor, there's no way to please a knave but fair words and gold: honest kind jailor, here's gold for thee: do but take pity upon me, a miserable coney-catched[2] courtier. Not? neither fair nor foul? thou art a degree worse than a woman; what shall I do? I can compare my fortune, and my unfortunate self, to nothing so fitly as my bass here; we suffer every fool to play upon us for their pleasure; and indeed 'twas the intent of our Creator that made fiddles and servitors to nothing but to be played upon, and played upon we shall be, till our heart-strings crack, and then they either cast us aside or hang us up, as worthy no other employment. Well, if I can work my means of escape, so: if not, I must lie by it. [*Exit.*

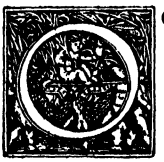
[1] Pierced, stabbed.

[2] "A conie-catcher, a name given to deceivers, by a metaphor, taken from those that rob warrens, and conie-grounds, using all means, sleights, and cunning to deceive them, as pitching of nets before their holes, fetching them in by tumblers, &c."—*Minsheu*, quoted by *Wright*.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.—*Venice. The* DUKE'S *Palace.*

Enter OCTAVIO, FRANCISCO, HIPPOLITO, FLAMINEO, *and* Attendants.



CT. My daughter fled! and with Hortensio?
It bears no formal shape of likelihood;
Her eagle spirit soared too proud a pitch
To seize so base a prey; let privy search
Look through the city's bosom till they find her:
For gone she is not.

Fran. Has not Antonio's son
Sent them by some base practice to their death?

Oct. His breast's too full of honour.

Enter JULIO.

Trusty Julio!
What weighty business draws thee from thy charge?

Jul. Came not the cause afore me? the proud Mantuans
Basely revolt,[1] deposed me from the seat
And chair of regentship, sending in quest
Of proud Antonio their late-banished duke;
Him if they find or Aspero his son,
They'll reinstal him in the regiment.[2]

[1] *i.e.* Revolted. [2] Sovereignty.

Enter ASSISTANCE.

Oct. Him let them seek in the vast shades of death.
As for his son—

Ass. He's sure enough, my lord; he was a mad knave when he came in, but I think I have made a tame fool of him by this time: for a has neither had bread nor water these four and forty hours.

Oct. More villain thou.

Ass. My lord, Hortensio was the villain; he left such command with me; he's the wheel that turns about, and I, a country Jack,[1] must strike when I am commanded.

Oct. Although my foe, he's honourably tempered,
Yet armed against my life: go call him forth,
[*Exit* ASSISTANCE.
Guard in my safety with a ring of steel,
And mark how proudly he'll demean revenge.

Re-enter ASSISTANCE *accompanied by* HORTENSIO, *bareheaded, with his crowd.*[2]

Ass. Goblins, spirits, furies, fairies! the prison is haunted!

Oct. With a knave, is't not?

Ass. Yes, and an old fool, my lord, in the likeness of Hortensio.

Oct. Villain, where's Aspero?

Ass. I know not, my lord: I let him in and my lady to laugh at him; and, it seems, he consented to treason, and let him out in his apparel.

Hort. They consented together to cozen me; for taking delight (as my betters may do) in a foolish pastime called blindman's-buff, they stole away my gown, escaped the prison, and left me in fools' paradise, where what song I have played my viol can witness. They made me a little better than a bawd, my lord.

Fran. In act?

[1] A figure striking the bell in old clocks was called a Jack.
[2] Fiddle; from Welsh *crwth*.

Hort. Not merely in act: *sed cogitatione, et id satis est, ut inquit Suetonius.*

Oct. Is he escaped, and Florimel with him?
Hortensio, thy head shall answer it.

Hort. I pray let my tongue be my head's attorney, and plead my excuse.

Oct. Urge no excuse: away with him to prison.

Ass. It shall be done, my lord.

Oct. Nay, you, sir, too, shall taste of the same sauce; away with both.
Come, my sons,
Let's levy present arms 'gainst Mantua.
Being scarce come home, we must abroad again;
The common good's a careful prince's pain. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Mantua. The* DUKE'S *Palace.*

Enter ANTONIO, LUCIDA, HERMIA, *and* Lords.

Ant. You that in all my banished pilgrimage
Would never alienate your natural loves,
But in desire to see me reinstalled
Have thrust out proud Octavio's substitute
And seated me in ancient dignity,
I am yours, and ready at your best dispose.

1st Lord. Your own, my liege; we, like inferior lights,
Take life from your reflection, for like stars
Unto the sun, are counsellors to kings:
He feeds their orbs with fire, and their shine
Contend to make his glory more divine;
And such are we to great Antonio.

Ant. The veins and arteries of Antonio
Through which the blood of greatness flows in us;
Our life, and cause efficient of our state
And these our pretty partners in exile.

2nd Lord. We ha' yet performed but the least part of duty,
Your reinstalment: it rests, that with our blood
We keep out innovasive[1] violence.

Ant. You new create me, and breathe second life
Into my dying bosom; knew my son
Of this unlooked for fortune! but ill fate
Has played the traitor, and given up his life
To coward treason [*A shout within.*

Enter ASPERO *and* FLORIMEL *with* Page.

Asp. 'Udsfoot, what offence have I committed against the state, that these iron-handed plebeians so applaud me for?

Flo. 'Tis a sign they love you.

Asp. I had rather they should hate me; it makes me suspect my bosom; for they love none but the masters of factions, treasons, and innovations.

Flo. Then you do not love the commons.

Asp. Yes, as wise men do their flattering wives, only for show: the popular voice is like a cry of bawling hounds; an they get the foot of a fantastic and popular-affecting statesman, they never leave him, till they have chased him into disgrace, and then, like hounds, are at a loss, and with their loss—See, I have found my father. Safety attend you!

Ant. Welcome, thou hope of Mantua and of us.
We now are honour's new-beginners, boy,
And may we better thrive than heretofore.

Asp. Never doubt it, father; I have attractive stuff that will draw customers.

Ant. What lady's that?

Flo. One that has played the part of a constable,—brought you home a runaway.

Asp. A friend of mine, father, but daughter to your arch-enemy.

[1] Innovate, to bring in something not known before.—*Johnson.*

Ant. Octavio's daughter?

Asp. Yes, faith; you are out with the father, and I'll see if I can fall in with the daughter.

Flo. And am I not a good child to leave my father's love at six and seven,[1] and hazard my honour upon your son's naked promise, and your hopeful acceptance?

Asp. She has followed me through much danger.

Ant. The better welcome; I love her for't.

Asp. Like her an you please, I'd have nobody love her but myself.

Ant. And, lady, though your father be our foe,
The virtuous love betwixt our son and you
May ne'ertheless retain his sympathy.

Flo. Shall ne'ertheless retain his sympathy!
Antonio, know I am love's resolute,
Confirmed and grounded in affection:
I loved your son, not for he was a prince,
But one no better than his present fortunes;
I'll love him still, since I first loved him so,
Let father, friends, and all the world say no.

Asp. There's mettle, father; how can we choose but get cocking[2] children, when father and mother too are both of the game?

Enter Messenger.

Mes. To arms, my lord: Octavio comes in arms,
To give a proud assault unto the city.

Asp. Proud his assault, as proud be our resist;
Vie shot for shot, and stake down life for life;
Our breast's as bold as theirs, our blood as deep:
All that we'll lose, or this our gettings keep.

Her. Come, brother, talk not of devouring war:
Say messenger, come not Octavio's sons?

Mes. They do, as proudly as the morning sun
Beating the azured pavement of the heavens.

[1] *i.e.* At sixes and sevens. [2] Forward.

Her. Then fear not, father, my sister and myself
Will be your champions, and defend the city.

Flo. Why, ladies, have you such large interest in our brothers?

Her. Princess, we have. Within there: reach our shields;
When beauty fights, the God of battles yields. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE III.—*Mantua.*

Enter, on the walls, ANTONIO, ASPERO, FLORIMEL, Page, Boy, *and* Attendants; *below,* FRANCISCO, HIPPOLITO, FLAMINEO, *and* JULIO.

Flo. They offer parley, let me answer them.
Brothers, how now? who made you soldiers?
Faith, e'en my father, as he made you lovers?
What, hath he changed your shepherds' hooks to swords,
Of Amorados made you armèd knights?
O seld-seen metamorphosis! I have known
Soldiers turn lovers, but for amorous lovers
To re-assume their valour, 'tis a change
Like winter thunder, and a thing as strange.

Fran. Our sister prisoner?

Hip. Tell me, Florimel,
Dost thou live here enforced, or of free will?

Flo. Free will, brothers, mine own free will; all free in Mantua; here's free will, i'faith, speak, am I not a free woman?

Page. As if you had served for't; any man may set up under her copy without a protection.

Fran. Ay, wag, are you there too?

Page. Yes, faith, my lord; my lady has had my attendance to a hair.

Flo. You lie, boy.

Page. If not mine, some bodies' else: there's one has [done—

Asp. What have I done, sirrah?

Page. Nay, nothing, but what my lady was very well content with.

Fran. Why, sister, shame you not to set your love
On one that is our father's enemy?

Flo. Shame? not a whit. But come, your wenches, brothers,—
I make no question, I have won my wager,—
Are they as fair as I?

Hip. Leave that to trial.
Aspero, make surrender of our sister.

Asp. And have her in quiet possession? what do you think me?

Fran. We think thee a proud villain, and our foe.

Flo. By Heaven, they're villains all that think him so.

Hip. Why, do you love him?

Flo. I should curse myself
If I should hate him.

Fran. Bring the ladders forth;
Bravely assault to separate their lives.

[*As they are scaling the walls,* HERMIA *and* LUCIDA *come forward.*

Her. Stand, proud Francisco,

Page. Stand! O excellent word in a woman,

Luc. Hold, Hippolito.

Page. Hold! up with that word, and 'tis as good as the other.

Fran. What nymph or goddess in my Hermia's shape
Stands to debar my entrance to the town?

Page. Madam, I wonder they enter not.

Flo. Why, boy, it seems they dare not. [already.

Page. O cowards, and have two such fair breaches

Fran. Immortal Pallas, that art more divine
In my love's beauty than thou cloth'st thee in,
Withdraw thyself, and give our fury limits.

Her. I will; but first, Francisco, take my shield.

Luc. And mine, as challenge to a single combat.

Her. Read the conditions, and return your answers.

Flo. Well done, i'faith, wenches. O that the old gray-beard, my father, were here! I'd have a bout with him, as I am honourable.

Fran. What's that?

A shepherd wooing of a country maid,
As she sits angling by a river's side;
By them an aged man making a net?
The motto: *Sic!* This emblem's moral is
The former love I had with Lucida,
And this, hope tells me, is fair Lucida.

Hip. Brother, my shield the like presents to me,
But holds far more familiar reference;
Here doth the amorous shepherd kiss the nymph,
Which she with a chaste blush consents unto;
And see, a gloomy man, clad like a pilgrim,
Comes in, and separates their sweet delights:
The motto: *Sic!* Ay, so my father came,
And banished me from beauteous Hermia;
And this, hope tells me, is fair Hermia.

Fran. The more I look, the more methinks 'tis she.

Hip. The more I think, the more I find 'tis she.

Fran. What should I think, to prove it is not she?

Flo. Look, think, find, prove, do what you can,
These are the wenches that you courted then[1]:
Then, honey bees, lay by your smarting stings,
And buzz sweet love into your ladies' ears;
Tell them of kisses, and such pretty things;
These drumming dubadubs love's pleasure fears.

Fran. O Heaven, O fortune, and most happy stars!
Do I find love, where I expected wars?

Hip. I that but now was all for war and death,
Am made all love; war's humour's out of breath.

[1] Spelt "than" in the original, thus obtaining the proper rhyme.

Enter, below, OCTAVIO, JULIO, *and others.*

Oct. How, my sons love the daughters of my foe?
It cannot be.

Jul. Then question them yourself.

Oct. Why, how now, sons? is this your worth in arms?

Fran. Why, are we not in arms, father?

Hip. Yes, and in such arms as no coward but would venture life to march in.

Oct. Then, boys, you love the daughters of Antonio?

Fran. We liked them first.

Hip. We keep that liking still.

Oct. And you will love them?

Flo. Father, in faith they will.

Oct. Ay, runaway, are you there? whom has your ladyship got to your husband?

Flo. One that I stumbled on at blindman's-buff; a proper man, a man every inch of him: and you would say so an you knew but as much as I—mean to know ere I have done with him.

Oct. Is he not son unto Antonio?

Asp. Great duke, I am, and prostrate on my knee
I beg a peace, which if your spleen deny,
I proudly stand, where erst I mildly kneeled,
And cast down bold defiance from these walls.

Oct. No more; your loves make my proud heart ashamed;
Your consort's sweet, and I'll not be a mean
To make it jar: what my sons like shall stand,
By my consent allowed and perfected;
All hate is banished, and revenge lies dead.

Asp. Then, 'stead of spears, let Hymen's torches flame
With hallowed incense; and the God of spright
Swell up your veins with amorous delight:
And so shut up our single comedy,
With Plautus' phrase: *Si placet, plaudite.* [*Exeunt.*

NATHANIEL FIELD.

NATHANIEL, or Nat, Field, the actor-dramatist, was born in 1587; his father, curiously enough, was a well-known puritanical preacher. About Field's early life we have but little information. We know, however, that he was one of the "Children of the Queen's Chapel," and it is not improbable that the members of this company received a good education at the expense of the Court; possibly, too, as Collier suggests, Ben Jonson may have interested himself in the young actor who was afterwards to do so much for the great dramatist's comedies. It is, indeed, in connection with Ben Jonson that Field is first mentioned: he was one of the six "principal comedians" engaged in the production of *Cynthia's Revels* in 1600, and as his name stands first on the list we may assume that he was the chief player in his troupe. *Cynthia's Revels* was followed by *The Poetaster* in 1601, and again Field took the first place. In 1606 we hear of him playing, with great success, in Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois*, and three years later his name occurs in the list of actors prefixed to *Epicœne;* moreover, his own first dramatic essay, *A Woman is a Weathercock*, was, in all probability, produced, or at least written, during that or the next year. There are references in the play (Act i., Sc. ii.) to the disputes which had arisen in connection with the succession to Juliers and Cleeve. From the title-page of the piece we learn that it was "acted before the King at Whitehall, and divers times privately at the Whitefriars by the Children of Her Majesty's Revels." Collier thinks that

Field still belonged to this company, although at the time in his 22nd year; he also suggests that the dramatist acted in his own piece.

Soon after the *Weathercock*—perhaps in 1612—came its antidote, the *Amends for Ladies;* it was brought out at the Blackfriars by "the Prince's Servants and the Lady Elizabeth's," from which it would seem that Field had left his original company and joined that of the Princess.

From this point onward we cannot trace Field's history very closely. The Princess Elizabeth married in 1613 the Elector Palatine, and henceforth her players were under the direction of Henslowe and Alleyn, in whose papers we get occasional glimpses of Field. There are, for instance, amongst the Dulwich archives three letters (unfortunately without dates, but probably to be referred to the years 1613 and 1614) in which Field applies to his manager for loans of money. From one of these letters, written by Massinger, Field, and Daborne, we gather that the three authors were engaged upon a play for Henslowe; another is from Daborne and Field, asking for an advance of money upon a piece which they had been commissioned to write; the third, from Field alone, is of the same begging description These documents show two things: that Field who, as an actor of great reputation, was doubtless well paid,[1] must have been very improvident, and that he was connected with Henslowe, and had not yet joined the King's Company, *i.e.*, not during Shakespeare's life. From yet another paper in the Alleyn collection we find that Field received £10 for performing in *Bartholomew Fair* before the king on Nov. 1*st*, 1614—the piece had been produced only the previous day at the Hope Theatre on the Bankside—and in connection with the same play we may remember Ben Jonson's direct eulogy of him. ("Which is your Burbadge now? . . . . Your best actor, your Field?"—Act v. Sc. ii.)

From 1614 to 1617, to keep to our dates, Field probably continued to act for Henslowe at the threatre in Paris Garden, and then, somewhere before 1619 or perhaps on the death of Burbadge in that year, he joined the King's Company, as a member of which his name occurs, though

[1] Thus Field could afford not to dedicate his *Woman is a Weathercock* to any patron, thereby losing, as he says, 40 shillings.

low down, in the list of actors given in the First Folio of Shakespeare, 1623. Field had certainly retired from the stage before 1625, or he would have been mentioned in the patent granted by Charles I. on his accession; that he was not amongst the performers who took part in the revival of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* in 1623 may point to an even earlier date for his withdrawal from the scenes. Why Field gave up acting so early, or how the last years of his life were spent, we have no means of determining; he died in 1633 on February the 20th, and was buried in the Church of St. Anne's, Blackfriars.[1] Field married in 1619, and a contemporary epigram, quoted by Collier, speaks of him as an ideal Othello from the domestic as from the dramatic point of view:—

> "Field is, in sooth, an actor—all men know it,
> And is the true Othello of the poet.
> I wonder if 'tis true, as people tell us,
> That, like the character, he is jealous.
> If it be so, and many living swear it,
> It takes no little from the actor's merit,
> Since, as the Moor is jealous of his wife,
> Field can display the passion to the life."

These rather ingenious lines may throw some light on the fierceness with which women are attacked in his two plays. Of the latter I must say a few words.

A Woman is a Weathercock was acted, as we have seen, somewhere about 1609; his *Amends for Ladies* somewhere about 1612. Besides writing these two comedies Field was part-author with Massinger of the *Fatal Dowry*,[2] his name is signed to six stanzas of commendatory verses prefixed to Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess;* and from the already referred-to papers in the Alleyn collection it is quite clear

[1] It may be worth while to point out that Field's reputation as a player survived, at the least to the next generation. I find him referred to in Flecknoe's *Defence of the Stage* (1660, or thereabouts) as having (with Burbadge) been the leading actor of the time.

[2] Field's share in this play cannot be determined. Gifford suggests that he was responsible for the weaker scenes; but Gifford, as Cunningham says, was extraordinarily jealous of Massinger's reputation, and we have no right to father upon Field inferior work of which Massinger (*teste The Bashful Lover*) was not entirely incapable.

that he had collaborated with Massinger and Daborne on works which have perished, possibly at the hands of "the execrable cook of the execrable Warburton." Of the plays which have survived—and we may remember that they were written when the author was scarcely out of his teens—the *Amends for Ladies* is, I think, the superior; it is less extravagant in the lighter scenes, and less rhetorical where the dramatist would strike a serious note. Both, however, are excellent pieces of work, marked by something of the vigorous and occasionally eccentric characterisation of Field's master, Ben Jonson, singularly clever in the easy manipulation of plot and underplot, and touched throughout with the vivacity and *verve* of true, though somewhat boisterous, comedy. Field's merits, in fact, are happily hit off in Mr. Swinburne's lines:—

> "Field, bright and loud with laughing flower and bird,
> And keen alternate notes of laud and gird."

A. WILSON VERITY.



A WOMAN
IS A WEATHERCOCK.







WOMAN IS A WEATHERCOCK was published in 1612, as acted at the Whitefriars by the Children of Her Majesty's Revels. It was edited by Collier, and is included (with *Amends for Ladies*) in Hazlitt's edition of Dodsley's *Old Plays*.

TO ANY WOMAN THAT HATH BEEN NO WEATHERCOCK



DID determine not to have dedicated my play to anybody, because forty shillings I care not for![1] and above few or none will bestow on these matters, especially falling from so fameless a pen as mine is yet. And now I look up, and find to whom my dedication is, I fear I am as good as my determination: notwithstanding, I leave a liberty to any lady or woman, that dares say she hath been no weathercock, to assume the title of patroness to this my book. If she have been constant, and be so, all I will expect from her for my pains is that she will continue so but till my next play be printed, wherein she shall see what amends I have made to her and all the sex,[2] and so I end my epistle without a Latin sentence.[3]

N. F.

[1] Malone, in his "History of the Stage," quotes this passage to show that such was, in Field's day, the ordinary price of the dedication of a play.—*Collier.*

[2] *i.e.* In his second play, the *Amends for Ladies*, which must have been written by this time, though it was not printed till 1618.

[3] Field seems to have rather piqued himself on his knowledge of Latin: see the following dedication "To the Reader."

TO THE READER.

READER, the saleman swears you'll take it very ill, if I say not something to you too. In troth, you are a stranger to me: why should I write to you? you never writ to me, nor I think will not answer my epistle. I send a comedy to you here, as good as I could then make; nor slight my presentation, because it is a play; for I tell thee, reader, if thou be'st ignorant, a play is not so idle a thing as thou art, but a mirror of men's lives and actions; nor, be it perfect or imperfect, true or false, is the vice or virtue of the maker. This is yet, as well as I can, *qualis ego vel Cluvienus.* Thou must needs have some other language than thy mother-tongue, for thou think'st it impossible for one to write a play, that did not use a word of Latin, though he had enough in him. I have been vexed with vile plays myself a great while, hearing many; now I thought to be even with some, and they should hear mine too. Fare thee well: if thou hast anything to say to me, thou know'st where to hear of me for a year or two, and no more, I assure thee.[1] N. F.

TO HIS LOVED SON,[2] NAT. FIELD, AND HIS WEATHERCOCK WOMAN.

To many forms, as well as many ways,
Thy active muse turns like thy acted woman:
In which dispraised inconstancy turns praise;
Th' addition being, and grace of Homer's seaman,
In this life's rough seas tossed, yet still the same:
So turns thy wit, inconstancy to stay,
And stay t' inconstancy. And as swift Fame
Grows as she goes, in Fame so thrive thy play,
And thus to standing turn thy woman's fall:
Wit, turned to everything, proves stay in all.

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

[1] This seems to show that Field looked forward to an early withdrawal from the stage.

[2] It was not unusual for elder poets to call the younger their sons. Ben Jonson allowed this title to Randolph, Howell, and others. Field also subscribes himself to old Henslowe the manager, "your loving son."—*Collier.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNT FREDERICK, engaged to BELLAFRONT.
SIR JOHN WORLDLY.
SCUDMORE, in love with BELLAFRONT.
NEVILL, his Friend.
MASTER STRANGE, a Merchant in love with KATHERINE.
PENDANT, a Sycophant of Count FREDERICK.
CAPTAIN POUTS.
SIR INNOCENT NINNY.
SIR ABRAHAM NINNY, his Son.
A Parson.
A Page.
A Tailor.
Servants.

BELLAFRONT,
KATHERINE,
LUCIDA,
} Daughters of Sir JOHN WORLDLY.

LADY NINNY, Wife of Sir INNOCENT.
MISTRESS WAGTAIL, her Gentlewoman.

SCENE—The Neighbourhood of LONDON.



A WOMAN IS A WEATHERCOCK.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.—SCUDMORE'S *Bed-chamber.*

Enter SCUDMORE, *half-ready*,[1] *reading a letter.*



CUD. [*Reads*[2]] "Whereas you write, my fortune and my birth,
Made above yours, may be a real cause
That I must leave you, know, thou worthiest man,
Thou hast a soul whose plenteous wealth supplies
All the lean wants blind chance hath dealt to thee.
Yet could I think the gods from all their store,
Who ne'er knew indigence unto their will,
Would out of all their stock of virtue left,
Or out of all new graces they can make,
Make such another piece as Scudmore is,
Then might he justly fear; but otherwise
Sooner the masculine element of fire
Shall flame his pyramids down to the earth;
Sooner her mountains shall swell up to Heaven,

[1] *i.e.* Half-dressed.

[2] Here, as occasionally throughout the play, Field has written the stage-directions in Latin.

Or softest April showers quench fires in hell:
Sooner shall stars from this circumference
Drop like false fiery exhalation,
Than I be false to vows made unto thee,
In whom aught near a fault I ne'er could see,
But that you doubted once my constancy.
Yours through the world, and to the end of time.
Bellafront."

Scud. [*Speaks as though in ecstasy.*] If what I feel I could express in words,
Methinks I could speak joy enough to men
To banish sadness from all love for ever!
O thou, that reconcil'st the faults of all
That frothy sex, and in thy single self
Confin'st—nay, hast engrossed, virtue enough
To frame a spacious world of virtuous women,
Hadst thou been the beginning of thy sex,
I think the devil in the serpent's skin
Had wanted cunning to o'ercome thy goodness,
And all had lived and died in innocency—
The white original creation! [*Knocking within.*
Who's there? come in.

Enter NEVILL.

Nev. What, up already, Scudmore! Ne'er a wench
With thee? Not e'en thy laundress?

Scud. Good morrow, my dear Nevill.

Nev. What's this? A letter? Sure, it is not so—
A letter written to Hieronimo.[1]

Scud. By Heaven! you must excuse me. Come, I know,
You will not wrong my friendship and your manners
To tempt me so.

Nev. Not for the world, my friend.
Farewell, good morrow. [*He is about to go out.*

Scud. Nay, sir, neither must you

[1] The references in our old plays to the *Spanish Tragedy* are almos endless. The "Hieronymus" cloak and hat were especially famous.

Depart in anger from this friendly hand.
I swear I love you better than all men,
Equally with all virtue in the world;
Yet this would be a key to lead you to
A prize of that importance—
Nev. Worthy friend,
I leave you not in anger: what d'ye mean?
Nor am I of that inquisitive nature framed
To thirst to know your private businesses.
Why, they concern not me: if they be ill
And dangerous, 'twould grieve me much to know 'em;
If good, they be so, though I know 'em not.
Nor would I do your love so gross a wrong
To covet to participate affairs
Of that near touch, which your assurèd love
Doth think not fit, or dares not trust me with.
Scud. How sweetly does your friendship play with mine,
And with a simple subtlety steals my heart
Out of my bosom. By the holiest love
That ever made a story, you're a man
With all good so replete, that I durst trust you
Ev'n with this secret, were it singly mine.
Nev. I do believe you. Farewell, worthy friend.
Scud. Nay, look you; this same fashion does not please me:
You were not wont to make your visitation
So short and careless.
Nev. 'Tis your jealousy
That makes you think so; for, by my soul,
You have given me no distaste by keeping from me
All things that might be burthenous, and oppress me.
In troth, I am invited to a wedding,
And the morn faster goes away from me,
Than I go toward it; and so, good morrow.
Scud. Good morrow, sir: think I durst show it you.
Nev. Now, by my life, I not desire it, sir,
Nor ever loved these prying, listening men,

That ask of others' states and passages:
Not one among a hundred but proves false,
Envious, and slanderous, and will cut that throat
He twines his arms about. I love that poet,
That gave us reading[1] not to seek ourselves
Beyond ourselves. Farewell.

Scud. You shall not go:
I cannot now redeem the fault I have made
To such a friend, but in disclosing all.

Nev. Now, if you love me, do not wrong me so.
I see you labour with some serious thing,
And think (like fairy's treasure) to reveal it,
Will cause it vanish; and yet to conceal it,
Will burst your breast: 'tis so delicious,
And so much greater than the continent.

Scud. O! you have pierced my entrails with your words,
And I must now explain all to your eyes.
Read, and be happy in my happiness.

Nev. Yet think on't: keep thy secret and thy friend
Sure and entire. O, give not me the means
To become false hereafter! or thyself
A probable reason to distrust thy friend,
Though he be ne'er so true. I will not see't.

Scud. I die, by Heaven, if you deny again.
I starve for counsel: take it: look upon it.
If you do not, it is an equal plague,
As if it had been known and published.
For God's sake, read! but with this caution—
By this right hand, by this yet unstained sword,
Were you my father flowing in these waves,
Or a dear son exhausted out of them,
Should you betray this soul of all my hopes,
Like the two brethren (though love made 'em stars)
We must be never more seen both together.[2]

Nev. I read it fearless of the forfeiture;
Yet warn you, be as cautelous not to wound

[1] Counsel.

My integrity with doubting likelihoods,
From misreport; but first exquire[1] the truth.

[NEVILL *reads*, SCUDMORE *now and then looking back.*[2]

Scud. Read, whilst I tell the story of my love,
And sound the truth of her heroic spirit,
Whom eloquence could never flatter yet,
Nor the best tongue of praises reach unto.
The maid there named I met once on a green,
Near to her father's house: methought she showed—
For I did look on her, indeed no eye
That owed a sensible member, but must dwell
A while on such an object:
The passing horses and the feeding kine
Stood still, and left their journeys and their food:
The singing birds were in contention,
Which should 'light nearest her; for her clear eyes
Deceived even men, they were so like bright skies.
Near, in a rivulet, swam two beauteous swans,
Whiter than anything but her neck and hands,
Which they left straight to comfort her: a bull
Being baiting on the green for the swains' sport,
She walking toward it, the vexed savage beast
Ceased bellowing, the snarling dogs were mute,
And had enough to do to look on her,
Whose face brought concord and an end of jars,
Though nature made 'em ever to have wars;
Had there been bears and lions, when she spake,
They had been charmed too; for Grecian's lute
Was rustic music to her heavenly tongue,
Whose sweetness e'en cast slumbers on mine eyes,
Soft as content, yet would not let me sleep.

Nev. "Yours through the world and to the end of time,
Bellafront."
Which Bellafront? rich Sir John Worldly's daughter?

[1] An obvious Latinism.
[2] During the following speech Scudmore is in the front of the stage

Scud. She is the food, the sleep, the air I live by.
Nev. O Heaven! we speak like gods and do like dogs.
Scud. What means my—
Nev. This day this Bellafront, the rich heir,
Is married unto Count Frederick,
And that's the wedding I was going to.
Scud. I prythee, do not mock me. Married!
Nev. It is no matter to be played withal,
But even as true, as women all are false.
Scud. O, that this stroke, were thunder to my breast;
For, Nevill, thou hast spoke my heart in twain,
And with the sudden whirlwind of thy breath
Hast ravished me out of a temperate soil,
And set me under the red burning zone.
Nev. For shame! return thy blood into thy face.
Know'st not how slight a thing a woman is?
Scud. Yes, and how serious too. Come! I'll t' the Temple:
She shall not damn herself for want of counsel.
Nev. O, prythee, run not thus into the streets!
Come, dress you better: so. Ah! as thy clothes
Are, like thy mind, too much disordered.
How strangely is this tide turned! For a world,
I would not but have called here as I went.
Collect thy spirits: we will use all means
To check this black fate flying toward thee. Come!
If thou miscarriest, 'tis my day of doom.
Scud. Yes—now I'm fine. Married! It may be so;
But, women, look to't: if she prove untrue,
The devil take you all, that are his due! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Sir JOHN WORLDLY'S *House.*

Enter Count FREDERICK, *a* Tailor *trussing him;*[1] *attended by a* Page.

Count F. Is Sir John Worldly up, boy?

Page. No, my lord.

Count F. Is my bride up yet?

Page. No.

Count F. No! and the morn so fair?

Enter PENDANT.

Pen. Good morrow, my thrice honoured and heroic lord.

Page. Good morrow, your lord and master, you might say, for brevity sake. [*Aside.*

Count F. Thou'st a good tailor, and art very fine.

Pen. I thank your lordship.

Page. Ay, you may thank his lordship indeed. [*Aside.*

Pen. 'Fore God, this doublet sets in print, my lord;
And the hose excellent; the pickadel[2] rare.

Page. He'll praise himself in trust with my lord's tailor.
For the next St. George's suit.

Count F. O, good morrow, tailor;
I abhor bills in a morning.

Pen. Your honour says true:
Their knavery will be discerned by daylight;
But thou may'st watch at night with bill in hand,
And no man dares find fault with it.

Tai. A good jest, i' faith. Good morrow to your lordship. A very good jest. [*Exit.*

Count F. I wonder my invited guests are so tardy. What's o'clock?

[1] *i.e.* Tying the points of his hose.

[2] A pickadel, says Nares, "is a piece set round the edge of a garment, whether at the top or bottom, most commonly the collar." According to Skeat, the word is of Spanish origin, from a root *picar* =to prick.

Pen. Scarce seven, my lord.

Count F. And what news, Pendant?
What think'st thou of my present marriage?
How shows the beauty to thee I shall wed?

Pen. Why, to all women like Diana among her nymphs.

Page. There's all his reading. [*Aside.*

Pen. A beauty of that pureness and delight,
That none is worthy of her but my lord,
My honourable lord.

Count F. But then her fortune,
Matched with her beauty, makes her up a match.

Pen. By Heaven, unmatchable!—for none fit but lords,
And yet for no lord fit but my good lord.

Count F. And that her sister, then, should love me too,
Is it not strange?

Pen. Strange? no, not strange at all.
By Cupid, there's no woman in the world
But must needs love you, doat, go mad for you.
If you vouchsafe reflection,[1] 'tis a thing
That does it home: thus much reflection
Catches 'em up by dozens like wild fowl.

Page. Now, ye shall taste the means, by which he eats [*Aside.*

Pen. Nature herself, having made you, fell sick
In love with her own work, and can no more
Make man so lovely, being diseased with love.
You are the world's minion of a little man.
I'll say no more: I would not be a woman,
For all has been got by them.[2]

Count F. Why, man, why?

Pen. Heart! I should follow you like a young rank whore,
That runs proud of her love; pluck you by the sleeve,
Whoe'er were with you, in the open street,

[1] *i.e.* If you but glance at them.

[2] *i.e.* Pendant has to flatter the Count by pretending that women always admire little men. Minion (Fr. *Mignon*) is defined by Cotgrave to mean "dainty, spruce, neat."

With the impudency of a drunken oyster-wife;
Put on my fighting waistcoat and the ruff
That fears no tearing; batter down the windows,
Where I suspected you might lie all night;
Scratch faces, like a wild-cat of Picked-hatch.[1]

Count F. Pendant, thou'lt make me doat upon myself.

Pen. Narcissus, by this hand, had far less cause.

Count F. How know'st thou that?

Page. They were all one, my lord.

Pen. How do I know? I speak my conscience:
His beauties were but shadows to my lord.
Why, boy, his presence would enkindle sin
And longing thoughts in a devoted nun.
O foot! O leg! O hand! O body! face!
By Jove, it is a little man of wax.

Count F. Thou'rt a rare rascal: 'tis not for nothing
That men call thee my Commendations.[2]

Page. For nothing? no; he would be loth it should.

Enter Captain POUTS.

Count F. Good morrow, and good welcome, Captain Pouts.

Pouts. Good morning to your honour, and all joy
Spring from this match, and the first year a boy!
I commanded[3] these two verses o' purpose to salute your honour.

Count F. But how haps it, captain, that your intended marriage with my father-in-law's third daughter is not solemnised to-day?

[1] A prostitutes' haunt, generally supposed to have been in Turnmill Street, Clerkenwell, but which was situated at the back of a turning called Rotten-row, opposite the Charterhouse wall in Goswell Street.—See *Cunningham's Handbook of London.*

[2] Later in the play Pendant acknowledges that he lives "upon commending my lord."

[3] The old copy reads "commend"; the reading in the text is Mr. Hazlitt's correction, and makes excellent sense. Captain Pouts not being a poet himself, has had to order the couplet of some verse-writer.

Pen. My lord tells you true, captain; it would have saved meat.

Pouts. Faith, I know not. Mistress Kate likes me not; she says I speak as if I had pudding in my mouth, and I answered her, if I had, it was a white pudding,[1] and then I was the better armed for a woman; for I had a case about me. So one laughed, and the other cried fie: the third said I was a bawdy captain; and there was all I could get of them.

Count F. See, boy, if they be up yet: maids are long liers, I perceive.

Page. How if they will not admit me, my lord.

Count F. Why, should they not admit you, my lord, you cannot commit with 'em, my lord.

Page. Marry, therefore, my lord. [*Exit* Page.

Count F. But what should be the reason of her so sudden alteration? she listened to thee once, ha?

Pen. Have you not heard, my lord, or do ye not know?

Count F. Not I, I swear.

Pen. Then you know nothing that is worth the knowing.

Pouts. That's certain: he knows you.

Pen. There's a young merchant, a late suitor, that deals by wholesale, and heir to land, well-descended, of worthy education, beholding to nature.

Count F. O, 'tis young Strange.

Pouts. Is't he that looks like an Italian tailor out of the laced wheel?[2] that wears a bucket on his head?

Count F. That is the man: yet believe me, captain, it is a noble sprightly citizen.

Pouts. Has he money?

Count F. Infinitely wealthy.

[1] A kind of sausage.

[2] From this passage it should seem that Italian tailors in Field's time wore peculiarly wide and stiff ruffs, like a wheel of lace round their necks. Nothing on the point is to be found in R. Armin's *Italian Taylor and his Boy*, 1609.—*Collier.*

Pouts. Then, captain, thou art cast. Would I had gone to Cleveland![1] Worldly loves money better than I love his daughter. I'll to some company in garrison. Good bye.

Count F. Nay, ye shall dedicate this day to me.
We speak but by the way, man: ne'er despair;
I can assure you, she is yet as free as air.

Pen. And you may kill the merchant with a look:
I'd threaten him to death. My honored lord
Shall be your friend: go to, I say he shall:
You shall have his good word. Shall he, my lord?

Count F. 'Sfoot! he shall have my bond to do him good.

Pen. La! 'tis the worthiest lord in Christendom.
O captain, for some fourscore brave spirits, once
To follow such a lord in some attempt!

Pouts. A hundred, sir, were better.

Enter Sir INNOCENT NINNY, Lady NINNY, Sir ABRAHAM, *and* Mistress WAGTAIL.

Count F. Here's more guests.

Pouts. Is that man and wife?

Pen. It is Sir Innocent Ninny: that's his lady,
And that Sir Abraham, their only son.

[Count FREDERICK *discourses with* Sir INNOCENT *and* Lady NINNY: ABRAHAM *looks about.*

Pouts. But did that little old dried neat's tongue, that eel-skin, get him?

Pen. So 'tis said, captain.

Pouts. Methinks he in his lady should show like a needle in a bottle of hay.

Pen. One may see by her nose what pottage she loves.

[1] The disputes about the succession to Juliers and Cleeve, which eventually led to the Thirty Years War, began in 1609. Many Englishmen crossed over to the Netherlands, amongst others, as we learn from his *Autobiography*, Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Pouts. Is your name Abraham? Pray, who dwells in your mother's back-side,[1] at the sign of the aqua-vitæ bottle?

Pen. God's precious! Save you, Mistress Wagtail.

[*Pulls her by the sleeve.*

Wag. Sweet Master Pendant.

Abra. Gentlemen, I desire your better acquaintance. You must pardon my father; he's somewhat rude, and my mother grossly brought up, as you may perceive.

Count F. Young Master Abraham! cry ye mercy, sir.

Abra. Your lordship's poor friend, and Sir Abraham Ninny.

The dub-a-dub of honour, piping hot
Doth lie upon my worship's shoulder-blade.

Sir Inn. Indeed, my lord, with much cost and labour we have got him knighted;[2] and being knighted under favour, my lord, let me tell ye he'll prove a sore knight, as e'er run at ring. He is the one and only Ninny of our house.

Lady Nin. He has cost us something, ere he came to this.

Hold up your head, Sir Abraham.

Abra. Pish, pish, pish, pish!

Count F. D'ye hear how—

Pen. O my lord.

Pouts. I had well hoped she could not have spoke, she is so fat.

Count F. Long may'st thou wear thy knighthood; and thy spurs
Prick thee to honour on, and prick off curs.

Abra. Sir Abraham thanks your honour, and I hope your lordship will consider the simplicity of parents a couple of old fools, my lord, and I pray so take 'em.

[1] "Backyard" usually, but here the phrase seems to mean rather a house in the rear.—*Hazlitt.*

[2] The indiscriminate creation of Knights by James I., is often alluded to. See *The Silent Woman*, I. i., and *The Alchemist*, II. i.

All. Ha! ha! ha!

Abra. I must be fain to excuse you here: you'll be needs coming abroad with me. If I had no more wit than you now, we should be finely laughed at.

Sir Inn. By'r lady, his worship says well: wife, we'll trouble him no longer. With your honour's leave, I'll in and see my old friend Sir John, your father that shall be.

Lady Nin. I'll in, too, and see if your bride need no dressing. [*Exeunt* Sir INNOCENT *and* Lady NINNY.

Count F. 'Sfoot, as much as a tripe, I think:
Haste them, I pray. Captain, what thinkest thou
Of such a woman in a long sea-voyage,
Where there were a dearth of victuals?

Pouts. Venison, my lord, venison.

Pen. I' faith, my lord, such venison as a bear is.

Pouts. Heart! she looks like a black bombard[1] with a pint pot waiting upon it. [*Exit* Mistress WAGTAIL.

Count F. What countrymen were your ancestors, Sir Abraham?

Abra. Countrymen! they were no countrymen: I scorn it. They were gentlemen all: my father is a Ninny, and my mother was a Hammer.

Pouts. You should be a knocker, then, by the mother's side.

Abra. I pray, my lord, what is yon gentleman? He looks so like a Saracen that, as I am a Christian, I cannot endure him.

Count F. Take heed what you say, sir; he's a soldier.

Pen. If you cross him, he'll blow you up with gunpowder.

Abra. In good faith, he looks as if he had had a hand in the treason.[2] I'll take my leave.

[1] Properly a piece of artillery, but often applied to large vessels containing liquor. So Trinculo, *Tempest*, II. ii., thinks that the cloud, "yond huge one, looks like a foul bombard that would shed his liquor."

[2] Gunpowder Plot, Nov. 5, 1605.

Count F. Nay, good Sir Abraham, you shall not leave us.

Pen. My lord shall be your warrant.

Abra. My lord shall be my warrant? Troth, I do not see that a lord's warrant is better than any other man's, unless it be to lay one by the heels. I shall stay here, and ha' my head broke, and then I ha' my mends in my own hands: and then my lord's warrant will help me to a plaister, that's all.

Count F. Come, come; captain, pray shake the hand of acquaintance with this gentleman: he is in bodily fear of you.

Pouts. Sir, I use not to bite any man.

Abra. Indeed, sir, that would show you are no gentle man. I would you would bid me be covered. I am a knight. I was knighted o' purpose to come a-wooing to Mistress Lucida, the middle sister, Sir John Worldly's second daughter, and she said she would have me, if I could make her a lady, and I can do't now. O, here she comes.

Enter Sir JOHN WORLDLY, STRANGE, KATE, *and* LUCIDA *with a willow garland.*

Count F. My bride will never be ready, I think. Here are the other sisters.

Pen. Look you, my lord: there's Lucida wears the willow garland for you, and will so go to church, I hear. And look you, captain, that's the merchant.

Abra. Now doth the pot of love boil in my bosom: Cupid doth blow the fire; and—
I cannot rhyme to bosom; but I'll go reason with her.

Sir J. Wor. You'll make her jointure of that five-hundred, you say, that is your inheritance, Master Strange?

Strange. Sir, I will.

Sir J. Wor. Kate, do you love him?

Kate. Yes, faith, father, with all my heart.

Sir J. Wor. Take hands: kiss him. Her portion is four thousand.
Good morrow, my son count: you stay long for your bride;
But this is the day that sells her, and she
Must come forth like my daughter and your wife.
I pray, salute this gentleman as your brother;
This morn shall make him so, and though his habit
But speak him citizen, I know his worth
To be gentle in all parts. Captain!

Pouts. Sir.

Sir J. Wor. Captain, I could have been contented well,
You should have married Kate.

Kate. So could not Kate. [*Aside.*

Sir J. Wor. You have an honourable title.
A soldier is a very honourable title:
A captain is a commander of soldiers;
But look you, captain; captains have no money;
Therefore the Worldlys must not match with captains.

Pouts. So, sir, so.

Sir J. Wor. There are brave wars.

Pouts. Where?

Sir J. Wor. Find them out, brave captain.
Win honour and get money; by that time
I'll get a daughter for my noble captain.

Pouts. Good, sir, good.

Sir J. Wor. Honour is honour, but it is no money.
This is the tumbler, then, must catch the coney.
[*Looking at* STRANGE.

Pouts. Thou art an old [1] fellow. Are you a merchant, sir?

Strange. I shame not to say yes. Are you a soldier, sir?

Abra. A soldier, sir? O God! Ay, he is a captain.

Strange. He may be so, and yet no soldier, sir;

[1] As we say "an *old* hand."

For as many are soldiers, that are no captains,
So many are captains, that are no soldiers.

Pouts. Right, sir: and as many are citizens that are no cuckolds—

Strange. So many are cuckolds that are no citizens. What ail you, sir, with your robustious looks?

Pouts. I would be glad to see for my money: I have paid for my standing.[1]

Strange. You are the nobler captain, sir;
For I know many that usurp that name,
Whose standings pay for them.

Pouts. You are a peddler.

Strange. You are a pot-gun.

Pouts. Merchant, I would thou hadst an iron tail,
Like me.

Count F. Fie, captain! You are to blame.

Pen. Nay, God's will! You are to blame indeed, if my lord say so.

Pouts. My lord's an ass, and you are another.

Abra. Sweet Mistress Luce, let you and I withdraw: This is his humour. Send for the constable!

Pouts. Sirrah, I'll beat you with a pudding on the 'Change.

Strange. Thou dar'st as well kiss the wide-mouthed cannon
At his discharging, as perform as much
As thou dar'st speak; for, soldier, you shall know,
Some can use swords, that wear 'em not for show.

Kate. Why, captain, though ye be a man of war, you cannot subdue affection. You have no alacrity in your eye, and you speak as if you were in a dream. You are of so melancholy and dull a disposition, that on my conscience you would never get children; nay, nor on my body neither; and what a sin were it in me, and a most pregnant sign of concupiscence, to marry a man that wants the mettle of generation, since that is the

[1] *i.e.* As though they were at some entertainment or show.

blessing ordained for marriage, procreation the only end of it. Besides, if I could love you, I shall be here at home, and you in Cleveland abroad. I among the bold Britons, and you among the hot-shots.

Sir J. Wor. No more puffing, captain ;
Leave batteries with your breath : the short is this.
This worthy count this morning makes my son,
And with that happy marriage this proceeds.
Worldly's my name, worldly must be my deeds.

Pouts. I will pray for civil wars, to cut thy throat
Without danger, merchant. I will turn pirate,
But I'll be revenged on thee.

Strange. Do, captain, do :
A halter will take up our quarrel then.

Pouts. 'Swounds ! I'll be revenged upon ye all !
The strange adventure thou art now to make
In that small pinnace, is more perilous
Than any hazard thou could'st undergo.
Remember, a scorned soldier told thee so. [*Exit.*

Strange. Go, walk the captain, good Sir Abraham.

Abra. Good faith, sir, I had rather walk your horse.
I will not meddle with him. I would not keep
Him company in his drink for a world.

Sir J. Wor. But
What good do you, Sir Abraham, on my daughter ?
I could be e'en content, my Lucida
Would skip your wit and look upon your wealth,
And this one day let Hymen crown ye all.

Abra. O no, she laughs at me and scorns my suit :
For she is wilder and more hard withal,
Than beast or bird, or tree, or stony wall.

Kate. Ha ! God-a-mercy, old Hieronimo.[1]

Abra. Yet she might love me for my lovely eyes.

Count F. Ay, but perhaps your nose she doth despise.

Abra. Yet might she love me for my dimpled chin.

[1] Sir Abraham quotes from *The Spanish Tragedy*, and Kate detects his plagiarism.

Pen. Ay, but she sees your beard is very thin.

Abra. Yet might she love me for my proper body.

Strange. Ay, but she thinks you are an errant noddy.

Abra. Yet might she love me, 'cause I am an heir.

Sir J. Wor. Ay, but perhaps she doth not like your ware.

Abra. Yet might she love me in despite of all.

Luc. Ay, but indeed I cannot love at all.

Sir J. Wor. Well, Luce, respect Sir Abraham, I charge you.

Luc. Father, my vow is passed :[1] whilst the earl lives,
I ne'er will marry, nor will pine for him.
It is not him I love now, but my humour ;
But since my sister he hath made his choice,
This wreath of willow, that begirds my brows,
Shall never cease to be my ornament,
'Till he be dead, or I be married to him.

Pen. Life ! my lord ; you had best marry 'em all three. They'll never be content else.

Count F. I think so too.

Sir J. Wor. These are impossibilities. Come, Sir Abraham.
A little time will wear out this rash vow.

Abra. Shall I but hope ?

Luc. O, by no means. I cannot endure these round breeches : I am ready to swoon at them.

Kate. The hose are comely.

Luc. And then his left leg : I never see it, but I think on a plum-tree.

Abra. Indeed, there's reason there should be some difference in my legs, for one cost me twenty pounds more than the other.

Luc. In troth, both are not worth half the money.

Count F. I hold my life, one of them was broke, and cost so much the healing.

[1] Made.

Abra. Right hath your lordship said; 'twas broke indeed
At foot-ball in the university.[1]
Pen. I know he is in love by his verse-vein.
Strange. He cannot hold out on't: you shall hear.
Abra. Well since I am disdained, off garters blue!
Which signify Sir Abram's love was true;
Off, cypress black! for thou befits not me;
Thou art not cypress of the cypress-tree,
Befitting lovers. Out, green shoe-strings, out!
Wither in pocket, since my Luce doth pout.
Gush, eyes; thump, hand; swell, heart; buttons, fly open!
Thanks, gentle doublet, else my heart had broken.[2]
Now to thy father's country house at Babram
Ride post; there pine and die, poor, poor Sir Abram.
All. O doleful dump! [*Music plays.*
Sir J. Wor. Nay, you shall stay the wedding. Hark, the music!
Your bride is ready.
Count F. Put spirit in your fingers! louder still,
And the vast air with your enchantments fill. [*Exeunt.*

[1] The subsequent reference to Babram points to Cambridge.
[2] One is reminded somewhat of the "boots on, boots off," scene in the *Rehearsal*, III. ii.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.—*In front of a Church.*

Enter NEVILL, *dressed like a* Parson.

NEV. Thus for my friend's sake have I taken orders,
And with my reason and some hire beside
Won the known priest, that was to celebrate
This marriage, to let me assume his place;
And here's the character of his face and beard.
By this means, when my friend confronts the maid
At the church-door (where I appointed him
To meet him like myself; for this strange shape
He altogether is unwitting of),
If she (as one vice in that sex alone
Were a great virtue) to inconstancy past
Join impudency, and slight him to his face,
Showing a resolution to this match,
By this attempt it will be frustrate,
And so we have more time, though but 'till night,
To work, to speak with her, or use violence;
For both my blood and means are at his service.
The reason, too, I do this past his knowledge
Is, that his joy may be the more complete;
When being resolved she's married and gone,

I can resolve him otherwise. Thus I know
Good deeds show double that are timely done,
And joy that comes past expectation.

Enter SCUDMORE, *in tawny.*

Yonder he comes, dead in his melancholy.
I'll question him. and see if I can raise
His spirit from that it restless rests upon :
He cannot know me. Ho! good morrow, sir.

Scud. Good morrow to no living thing but one,
And that is Nevill. O, the vows, the vows,
The protestations and becoming oaths,
Which she has uttered to me!—so sweet, so many,—
As if she had been covetous not to leave
One word for other lovers, which I pitied :
She said indeed I did deserve 'em all.
Her lips made swearings sound of piety,
So sweet and prettily they came from her;
And yet this morn she's married to a lord.
Lord! lord! how often has she kissed this hand,
Lost herself in my eyes, played with my hair,
And made me (a sin I am not subject to)
Go away proud, improved by her favours;
And yet this morn she's married to a lord—
The bells were ringing as I came along.

Nev. Yes, sir; 'tis for the great marriage 'twixt—

Scud. Pray, hold there; I know it too-too well.
The tokens and the letters I have still.
The dangers I have passed for her dear sake
By day and night, to satisfy her wishes!
That letter I so lately did receive,
And yet this morn she's married to a lord!
O memory, thou blessing to all men,
Thou art my curse and cause of misery,
That tell'st me what I have been in her eyes,
And what I am! As it is impossible
To find one good in the whole world of women—
But how I lose myself and the remembrance.

Of my dear friend, who said he would meet me here.
What is this priest, that walks before the church?
Why walk you here so early, sir?
Nev. I am appointed
Here to attend the coming of the brides,
Old Sir John Worldly's daughters.
Scud. Are there two?
Nev. Yes, sir: the eldest marries Count Frederick.
Scud. O!
Nev. The middlemost wears willow for his sake;
The youngest marries the rich merchant Strange.
Scud. He is right worthy, and my well-known friend.
But, parson, if you marry Bellafront,
The horror of thy conscience shall exceed
A murderer's. Thou shalt not walk alone,
Nor eat nor sleep, but a sad lover's groans
And curses shall appear and fright thy soul.
I tell thee, priest, they're sights more terrible
Than ghosts or sprites, of which old wives tell tales.
Thou shalt run mad! thou shalt be damned indeed!
Nev. Now God forfend! the reason, sir, I pray?
Scud. She is contracted, sir—nay, married
Unto another man, though it want form:
And such strange passages and mutual vows,
'Twould make your short hair start through your black cap
Should you but hear it!
Nev. Sir, I'll take no notice
Of things I do not know: the injured gentleman
May bring 'em after into the spiritual court,
And have a fair pull on't—a poor gentleman
(For so I take him by his being deceived)
'Gainst a great count and an old wealthy knight.
Scud. Thou Pancridge[1] parson! O, for my friend Nevill!

[1] *i.e.* Pancras, a part of the town in very bad repute, as other references show.

Some wile or other might remove this priest,
And give us breathing to cross their intent. [*Aside.*
Nev. Alas! my dear friend. [*Aside.*
Scud. Sir, do but you refuse to join them.
Nev. Upon what acquaintance, sir?
They are great persons, and I mean to rise:
I hope in time to have three livings, man;
And this were not the way, I take it, sir.
Scud. Why, look thee; there is gold.
Nev. O, by no means.
Scud. I seldom knew't refused yet by thy coat,
But where it would have been a cause of good.
Nev. But look ye; you shall see I'm a divine
Of conscience quite opposite to a lawyer:
I'll give you counsel, sir, without a fee.
This way they are to come; if you dare do't,
Challenge her as your own at the church-door:
I will not hinder you. [*Music plays.*
Scud. O, hark! they come.
Nevill, my friend! well, I must something do.
O, why should music, which joys every part,
Strike such sharp killing discords to my heart!

Music. *Enter* Sir JOHN WORLDLY, *who meets the* Parson, *and entertains him;* Count FREDERICK, BELLAFRONT, STRANGE, KATHERINE, LUCIDA *with willow;* PENDANT, Sir INNOCENT NINNY, Lady NINNY, Mistress WAGTAIL, Sir ABRAHAM *melancholy. The* Wedding Party[1] *walk gravely before all.* SCUDMORE *stands before them, and a* Boy *sings to the tuned music.*

SONG.

They that for worldly wealth do wed,
That buy and sell the marriage-bed,

[1] In the old edition of the play the initials W. P. are here given. Collier suggested that they stood for "waits playing," in reference to the attendant musicians, but it is more probable that they mean Wedding Party.

That come not warmed with the true fire,
Resolved to keep this vow entire,
Too soon find discontent:
Too soon shall they repent.
But, Hymen, these are no such lovers,
Which thy burning torch discovers.

Though they live, then, many a year,
Let each day as new appear
As this first; and delights
Make of all bridal nights.
Iö, Hymen! give consent
Blessed are the marriages that ne'er repent.

Count F. How now! who's this?
Pen. Young Scudmore.
All. 'Tis young Scudmore!
Scud. Canst thou this holy church enter a bride,
And not a corse, meeting these eyes of mine?
Bel. Yes, by my troth: what are your eyes to me,
But grey ones, as they are to everybody.
[*To the rest.*] The gentleman I do a little know:
He's frantic, sure! Forward, a' God's name, there!
Luc. Sister, this is not well, and will be worse.
Scud. O, hold thy thunder fast!
Count F. What is the matter?
Pen. I'll ask my lord. What is the matter, sir?
Sir J. Wor. Some idle words, my lord, 't may be, have passed
'Twixt Scudmore and my daughter heretofore;
But he has dreamt 'em things of consequence.
Pen. Pish! nothing else? set forward.
Nev. By your leave.
Scud. Can there be such a soul in such a shape?
My love is subject of such misery,
Such strange impossibilities and misfortune,
That men will laugh at me, when I relate
The story of it, and conceive I lie.

Why, madam that shall be—lady in *posse*—do titles,
Honours, and fortunes make you so forgetful?

Bel. You are insolent—nay, strangely saucy, sir,
To wrong me in this public fashion.

Sir J. Wor. Sirrah, go to: there's law.

Scud. There is, indeed,
And conscience too: old Worldly, thou hast one;
But for the other, wild Virginia,[1]
Black Afric, or the shaggy Scythia,
Must send it over as a merchandise,
Ere thou show any here.

Pen. My honoured lord.
Say but the word, I'll force him from the door.

Count F. I say the word: do it.

Scud. You, my lord's fine fool!

Abra. Ay, he, sir?

Scud. No! nor you, my lord's fool's fool.

Sir Inn. 'Ware, boy: come back.

L. Nin. Come back, I say, Sir Abraham.

Strange. 'Tis such a forward child.

[*They go into the Church.*[2]

Scud. My passion and my cause of grief's so great,
That it hath drowned all worthy parts in me;
As drink makes virtue useless in a man,
And with too much kills natural heat in him,
Or else I could not stand thus coldly tame,
And see them enter, but with my drawn sword
Should hale her by the hair unto the altar,
And sacrifice her heart to wrongèd love. [*Aside.*

Kath. On my life, it is so.[3]

[1] References to Virginia about this time are not unfrequent. Staines in the *City Gallant* remarks (when his fortunes are rather low)—"My refuge is Ireland or Virginia." James I. granted a patent on April 10, 1606, to merchants of London and Plymouth for the colonisation of the settlement.

[2] *i.e.* All but Kate, Strange, and Scudmore enter the church. Strange and Kate follow immediately, and leave Scudmore *solus*.—*Collier.*

[3] *i.e.* The answer to Strange's remark, "'Tis such a forward child."

Strange. Worthy friend,
I am exceeding sorry to see this,
But cannot help it.

Scud. I'll follow, and unfold all in the church.
Alas! to what end, since her mind is changed?
Had she been loyal, all the earthly lords
Could not have borne her so! what heinous sin
Hath she committed, God should leave her then?
I never dreamt of lying with my mother,
Nor wished my father's death, nor hated brothers;
Nor did betray trust, nor loved money better
Than an accepted friend—no such base thought
Nor act unnatural possessed this breast.
Why am I thus rewarded?—women! women!
He's mad, by heaven, that thinks you anything
But sensual monsters, and is never wise
Nor good, but when he hates you, as I now.
I'll not come near one—none of your base sex
Shall know me from this time; for all your virtues
Are like the buzzes[1] growing in the fields,
So weakly fastened t' ye by Nature's hand
That thus much wind blows all away at once.
Ye fillers of the world with bastardy,
Worse than diseases ye are subject to,
Know, I do hate you all: will write against you,
And fight against you: I will eat no meat
Dressed by a woman, old or young, nor sleep
Upon a bed made by their stealthy[2] hands.
Yet once more I will see this feminine devil,
When I will look her dead, speak her to hell!
I'll watch my time this day to do't, and then
I'll be in love with death, and readier still
His mortal stroke to take, than he to kill. [*Cornets. Exit.*

Loud music. Re-enter, as from the Church, Sir JOHN WORLDLY, NEVILL, *as the* Parson; Count FREDE-

[1] Gossamers.—*Hazlitt.*

[2] Old copy has "still given." Some change is obviously necessary, and "stealthy" may pass. Hazlitt suggests "stallion."

RICK, BELLAFRONT, STRANGE, KATHERINE; Sir INNOCENT NINNY, Lady NINNY, Sir ABRAHAM; LUCIDA, Mistress WAGTAIL, *and* PENDANT.

Count F. Sweet is the love purchased with difficulty.

Bel. Then, this cross accident doth relish[1] ours.

Strange. I rather think ours happier, my fair Kate,
Where all is smooth, and no rub checks our course.

Enter Captain POUTS.

Pouts. Are ye married?

Count F. Yes.

Pouts. The devil dance at your wedding! But for you, (*To* STRANGE) I have something else to say. Let me see: here are reasonable good store of people. Know, all my beloved brethren (I speak it in the face of the congregation), this woman I have lain with oftener—

All. How!

L. Nin. Before God, you are a wicked fellow to speak on't in this manner, if you have.

Strange. Lain with her?

Pouts. Yes. Good morrow. God give ye joy. [*Exit.*

Sir J. Wor. I am speechless with my anger. Follow him!

If it be true, let her be proved a whore:
If false, he shall abide the slander dearly.

Abra. Follow that list: I will not meddle with him.

Sir J. Wor. Why speak'st not thou to reconcile those looks,
That fight stern battles in thy husband's face?

Kath. Thou art not so unworthy to believe him.
If I did think thou didst, I would not open
My lips to satisfy so base a thought,
Sprung from the slander of so base a slave.

Strange. It cannot be! I'll tell you by to-morrow.
I am no fool, Kate. I will find some time

[1] Give a relish to.

To talk with this same captain. Pouts d'ye call him?
I'll be wi' ye to-night.

Kath. Sir, you shall not.
What stain my honour hath received by this
Base villain, all the world takes notice of.
Mark what I vow, and if I keep it not,
May I be so given o'er, to let this rogue
Perform his slander. Thou that wert ordained,
And in thy cradle marked to call me wife,
And in that title made as my defence,
Yet sufferedst him to go away with life,
Wounding my honour dead before thy face;
Redeem it on his head, and his own way,
Ev'n by the sword, his long profession,
And bring it on thy neck out of the field,
And set it clear amongst the tongues of men,
That all eyes may discern it slanderèd,
Or thou shalt ne'er enjoy me as a wife.
By this bright sun, thou shalt not! Nay, I'll think
As abjectly of thee as any mongrel
Bred in the city: such a citizen[1]
As the plays flout still, and is made the subject
Of all the stages. Be this true or no,
'Tis thy best course to fight.

Sir J. Wor. Why, Kate, I say—

Kath. Pray, pardon me: none feels the smart but I.
'Tis thy best course to fight: if thou be'st still,
And like an honest tradesman eat'st this wrong,
O, may thy spirit and thy state so fall,
Thy first-born child may come to the hospital.

Strange. Heaven, I desire thee, hear her last request,
And grant it too, if I do slack the first!
By thy assured innocency I swear,
Thou hast lost me half the honour I shall win
In speaking my intent. Come, let's to dinner.

[1] *i.e.* Such a man as Massinger applies the term "becco" to; see *The Bondman*, II. iii., and *The Picture*, V. iii.

Kath. I must not eat nor sleep, but weep,
Till it be done.
Bel. Sister, this resolution is not good:
Ill thrives that marriage that begins in blood.
Kath. Sister, inform yourself I have no ladyship
To gild my infamy, or keep tongues in awe.
If God love innocency, I am sure
He shall not lose in this action.
Strange. Nor is't the other's life.
Can give her to the world my perfect wife,
But what I do conceive. It is not blood, then,
Which she requires, but her good name again;
And I will purchase it; for, by Heaven, thou art
The excellent'st new-fashioned maid in this,
That ever ear shall hear a tale told of.
All. But hear ye.
Strange. Good people, save your labours, for by Heaven
I'll do it: if I do't not, I shall be pointed at,
Proclaimed the grand rich cuckold of the town;
Nay, wittol,[1] even by them are known for both.
Sir J. Wor. Take your revenge by law.
Strange. It will be thought
Your greatness and our money carries it:
For some say some men on the back of law
May ride and rule it like a patient ass,
And with a golden bridle in the mouth
Direct it unto anything they please.
Others report it is a spider's web,
Made to entangle the poor helpless flies,
Whilst the great spiders that did make it first,
And rule it, sit i' th' midst secure, and laugh.
My law in this shall only be my sword;
But, peradventure, not this month or two.
Kath. This month or two?
Count F. I'll be your second, then.

[1] *i.e.* Contented cuckold.

Strange. You proffer too much honour, my good lord.

Pen. And I will be your third.

Abra. I'll not be fourth or fifth,
For the old proverb's good, which long hath been,
Says safest 'tis sleeping in a whole skin.

Luc. God-a-mercy, Nab, I'll ha' thee, an't be but for thy manhood.

Sir Inn. Wife, my Lady Ninny, do you hear your son? He speaks seldom, but when he speaks—

Luc. He speaks proverbs, i' faith.

L. Nin. O, 'tis a pestilence knight, Mistress Lucida.

Luc. Ay, and a pocky.

Kath. This month or two! D'ye love me? not before? It may be I will live so long fame's whore! [*Exit.*

Sir J. Wor. What lowering star ruled my nativity! You'll come to dinner?

Strange. Yes.

Count F. Good morrow, brother.
Come, let's be merry in despite of all,
And make this day (as't should be) festival.

Sir J. Wor. This sour thwart beginning may portend
Good, and be crowned with a delicious end.

[*Exeunt all but* STRANGE.

Strange. So; I'll not see you, till my task be done:
So much false time I set to my intent,
Which instantly I mean to execute,
To cut off all means of prevention,
Which if they knew my day, they would essay,
Now for the merchant's honour. Hit all right:[1]
Kate, your young Strange will lie with you to-night.

[*Exit.*

Enter Mistress WAGTAIL; *the* Page, *stealing after her, conceals himself.*

Wag. What a stir is here made about lying with a gentlewoman! I have been lain with a hundred and a

[1] *i.e.* If all goes well.

hundred times, and nothing has come on't! but—hawk, hum! hawk, hum! O, O! Thus have I done for this month or two—hawk, hum! [*Coughs and spits.*

Page. Ah! God's will, are you at it? You have acted your name too much, sweet Mistress Wagtail. This was wittily, though somewhat knavishly followed on me.

Wag. Umph! O' my conscience, I am peppered. Well, thou tumblest not for nothing, for he dances as well that got thee, and plays as well on the viol, and yet he must not father thee. I have better men. Let me remember them, and here, in my melancholy, choose out one rich enough to reward this my stale virginity, or fit enough to marry my little honesty. Hawk, hawk! [*Coughs and spits.*

Page. She has a shrewd reach, I see that. What a casting she keeps. Marry, my comfort is, we shall hear by and by who has given her the casting-bottle.[1]

Wag. Hawk, hawk, hawk! bitter, bitter! Pray God, I hurt not the babe. Well, let me see, I'll begin with knights: *imprimis*, Sir John Do't-well and Sir William Burn-it.

Page. A hot knight, by my faith; Do't-well and Burn-it too.

Wag. For old Sir Innocent Ninny, my master, if I speak my conscience, look ye, I cannot directly accuse him. Much has he been about, but done nothing. Marry, for Sir Abraham, I will not altogether 'quit him. Let me see, there's four knights: now for gentlemen—

Page. And so she'll come down to the footmen.

Wag. Master Love-all, Master Liveby't, and Master Pendant. Hawk, hi'up, hi'up!

Page. By this light, I have heard enough. Shall I hold your belly too, fair maid of the fashion? [*Comes forward.*

Wag. What say ye, Jack Sauce?

Page. O fie, ill-mutton! you are too angry. Why, look

[1] A bottle for sprinkling perfume.

ye; I am my lord's page, and you are my lady's gentlewoman: we should agree better; and I pray, whither are you riding with this burthen in your dosser.[1]

Wag. Why, sir, out of town. I hope 'tis not the first time you have seen a child carried out of town in a dosser for fear of the plague.

Page. You have answered me, I promise you: but who put it in, I pray?

Wag. Not you, sir, I know, by your asking.

Page. I, alas! I know that by my talent; for I remember thus much philosophy of my schoolmasters, *ex nihilo nihil fit.* But come, setting this duello of wit aside, I have overheard your confession and your casting about for a father, and in troth, in mere charity, came in to relieve you. In the scroll of beasts, horses and asses, that have fed upon this common of yours, you named one Pendant: faith, wench, let him be the father. He is a very handsome gentleman, I can tell you, in my lord's favour. I'll be both secret and your friend to my lord. Let it be him; he shall either reward thee bountifully, or marry thee.

Wag. Sir, you speak like an understanding young gentleman, and I acknowledge myself much bound to you for your counsel.

Pen. [*Within*]. Will, Will!

Page. My lord hath sent him to call me. Now I hold a wager on't, if thou be'st not a fool, as most waiting women are, thou'lt use him in his kind.

Enter PENDANT.

Pen. Why, Will, I say! Go; my lord calls extremely.

Page. Did not I say so? Come, this is but a trick to send me off, sir. [*Exit.*

[1] "Dosser" is used for a basket generally, but as it means strictly a pannier for the back (from the Fr. *dossier*), it is here used very inappropriately with reference to the burden Mrs. Wagtail carries before her.—*Collier.*

Pen. A notable little rascal.
Pretty Mistress Wagtail, why do you walk so melancholy?
I sent him hence o' purpose. Come, shall's do?

Wag. Do! what would you do? You have done too much already.

Pen. What's the matter?

Wag. I am with child by you.

Pen. By me? Why, by me? A good jest, i' faith.

Wag. You'll find it, sir, in earnest.

Pen. Why, do you think I am such an ass to believe nobody has meddled with you but I?

Wag. Do you wrong me so much to think otherwise?
Thus 'tis for a poor damsel like myself
To yield her honour and her youth to any,
Who straight conceives she doth so unto many:
And as I have a soul to save, 'tis true.

Pen. Pray, do not swear. I do not urge you to't. 'Swounds, now I am undone! You walk somewhat round. Sweetheart, has nobody been tampering with you else? Think on't, for by this light, I am not worth the estate of an apple-wife. I do live upon commending my lord, the Lord of Hosts knows it, and all the world besides.
For me to marry thee will undo thee more,
And that thou may'st keep me, keep thee in fashion,
Sell thee to English, French, to Scot, and all,
Till I have brought thee to an hospital;
And there I leave you. Ha' you not heard nor read
Of some base slave that, wagging his fair head,
Does whistling at one end of his shop-walk,
Whilst some gay man doth vomit bawdy talk
In his wife's ears at the other? Such a rogue
Or worse shall I be; for, look ye, Mistress Wagtail, I do live like a chameleon upon the air, and not like a mole upon the earth. Land I have none. I pray God send me a grave, when I am dead.

Wag. It's all one. I'll have you for your qualities.

Pen. For my good ones, they are altogether unknown,

because they have not yet been seen, nor ever will be, for they have no being. In plain terms, as God help me, I have none.

Wag. How came you by your good clothes?

Pen. By undoing tailors; and then my lord (like a snake) casts a suit every quarter, which I slip into: therefore thou art worse than mad if thou wilt cast away thyself upon me.

Wag. Why, what 'mends will you make me? can you give me some sum of money to marry me to some tradesman, as the play says?

Pen. No, by my troth. But tell me this, has not Sir Abraham been familiar with you?

Wag. Faith, not enough to make up a child.

Pen. Couldst be content to marry him?

Wag. Ay, by my troth, and thank ye, too.

Pen. Has he but kissed thee?

Wag. Yes; and something more beside that.

Pen. Nay, an there ha' been any jot of the thing, beside that, I'll warrant thee, lay the child to him—

Stand stiffly to it, leave the rest to me;
By that fool thou shalt save thy honesty. [*Exeunt.*



ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.--*Before* Captain POUTS' *House.*

Enter STRANGE, *and knocks at a door.*

STRANGE. Lies Captain Pouts here, pray?

Enter a Servingman.

Ser. Sir, he does.

Strange. I prythee, tell him here's a gentleman would speak with him.

Ser. What may I call your name, sir?

Strange. No matter for my name.

Ser. Troth, sir, the captain is somewhat doubtful of strangers; and being, as most captains are, a little in debt, I know he will not speak with you, unless you send your name.

Strange. Tell him my name is Strange; that I am come
About that business he spake of to-day. [*Exit* Servant.
To have sent a formal challenge by a gentleman,
He being to choose his time, might peradventure
Have made him shift himself the sooner over.

Enter Captain POUTS *above.*

Pouts. Sir, I know your business. You are come to serve a warrant or a citation: I will not speak with you;

and get you gone quickly too, or I may happen send a bullet through your mazzard.[1] [*Exit.*

Strange. Strange cross! past expectation! well, I'll try; My other course may speed more happily. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Sir JOHN WORLDLY'S *House.*

Music. Enter with table-napkins, Count FREDERICK, Sir JOHN WORLDLY, NEVILL, PENDANT, Sir INNOCENT NINNY, Lady NINNY, Sir ABRAHAM. Servants *with wine, plate, tobacco, and pipes.*

Sir. J. Wor. Sir, had you borne us company to church, You had been the better welcome.

Count F. Faith, you had; I must needs say so too.

Pen. And I must needs say as my lord says.

Nev. Sir John, I thank you and my honoured lord: But I am sorry for this other news Concerning Mistress Kate and my good friend.

Sir J. Wor. 'Tis certain true: he keeps his word well too!
He said he would come to dinner.

Lady Nin. All we cannot get Mistress Katherine out of her chamber.

Sir J. Wor. O good old woman, she is top-shackled.

Lady Nin. 'Tis pestilence sack and cruel claret: knight, stand to me, knight, I say: up, a cold stomach! give me my aqua-vitæ bottle.

Sir Inn. O Guiniver! as I am a justice of peace and quorum, 'twere a good deed to commit thee. Fie, fie, fie!

Abra. Why, alas! I cannot help this, an I should be hanged: she'll be as drunk as a porter. I'll tell you, my lord, I have seen her so be-piss the rushes, as she has

[1] Head.

danced at a wedding. Her belly and that aqua-vitæ bottle have almost undone my father. Well, I think in conscience she is not my natural-begotten mother.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Nev. Well said, my wise Sir Abraham.[1]

C. Fred. O, this music
And good wine is the soul of all the world.

Sir J. Wor. Come, will your lordship make one at primero,[2]
Until your bride come forth?

Nev. You can play well, my lord.

Count F. Who, I?

Pen. Who? my lord? the only player at primero i' the court.

Abra. I'd rather play at bowls.

Pen. My lord's for you for that, too: the only bowler in London that is not a churchwarden.

Nev. Can he fence well, too, Master Pendant?

Pen. Who? my lord? the only fencer in Christendom. He'll hit you.

Abra. He shall not hit me, I assure you, now.

Nev. Is he good at the exercise of drinking, sir?

Pen. Who? my lord? the only drunkard i' th' world—drinker, I would say.

Abra. God-a-mercy for that.

Nev. I would he heard him.

Abra. I know a better whoremaster than he.

Nev. O fie! no: none so good as my lord.

Pen. Hardly, by'r Lady, hardly.

Count F. How now! who's this?

[1] This remark, and a question below, in the old copy are given to Luce; but Lucida is not upon the stage, and could not be there, as Scudmore afterwards enters, pretending to be the bearer of a letter from her. The name of *Nevill* has been substituted for Luce, and at least there is no impropriety in assigning what is said to him. Two other speeches, attributed to her, obviously belong to Sir Abraham.—*Collier.*

[2] A game at cards.

Enter SCUDMORE, *like a* Servingman, *with a letter.*

Sir J. Wor. What would you?

Scud. I would speak with the Lady Bellafront from the young Lady Lucy.

Sir J. Wor. You had best send in your letter; she is withdrawn.

Scud. My lady gave me charge of the delivery,
And I must do't myself, or carry it back.

Sir J. Wor. A trusty servant. That way leads you to her.

Count F. This trust in servants is a jewel. Come,
Let us to bowls i' th' garden. [*Exeunt.*

Scud. Blessed fate!

[SCUDMORE *passes one door, and enters at the other, where* BELLAFRONT *sits asleep in a chair, under a taffata canopy.*

Scud. O thou, whose words and actions seemed to me
As innocent as this smooth sleep which hath
Locked up thy powers! Would thou had'st slept, when first
Thou sent'st and profferedst me beauty and love!
I had been ignorant, then, of such a loss.
Happy's that wretch, in my opinion,
That never owned scarce jewels or bright sums:
He can lose nothing but his constant wants;
But speakless is his plague, that once had store,
And from superfluous state falls to be poor.
Such is my hell-bred hap! could Nature make
So fair a superficies to enclose
So false a heart? This is like gilded tombs,
Compacted of jet pillars, marble stones,
Which hide from 's stinking flesh and rotten bones.
Pallas so sat (methinks) in Hector's tent.
But time, so precious and so dangerous,
Why do I lose thee? Madam, my lady, madam!

Bel. Believe me, my dear friend, I was enforced.

Ha ! I had a dream as strange as thou art, fellow.
How cam'st thou hither ? what's thy business ?
Scud. That letter, madam, tells you.
Bel. Letter ? ha !
What, dost thou mock me ? here is nothing writ.
Scud. Can you read anything, then, in this face ?
Bel. O basilisk ! remove thee from my sight,
Or thy heart's blood shall pay thy rash attempt !
Ho ! who attends us there ?
Scud. Stir not a foot,
And stop your clamorous acclamations,
Or, by the bitterness of my fresh wrongs,
I'll send your ladyship to the devil quick !
I know the hazard I do undergo,
And whatsoever after becomes of me,
I'll make you sure first. I am come to speak—
And speak I will freely—and to bring back
Your letters and such things you sent ; and then
I'll ne'er see those deceiving eyes again.
Bel. O, I am sick of my corruption !
For God's sake, do not speak a word more to me.
Scud. Not speak ! yes, woman, I will roar aloud :
Call thee the falsest fair that ever breathed ;
Tell thee, that in this marriage thou hast drowned
All virtue left to credit thy weak sex,
Which being (as 'twere) committed to thy trust,
Thou traitorously hast betrayed it thus !
Did I entice, or ever send thee gifts,
To allure thee to reflect a beam on me ?
Nay, didst not thou thyself send and invent,
Past human wit, our means of intercourse ?
Why dost thou then prove base unto thyself,
Perjured and impious ? know, the good thou hast lost
In my opinion, doth outvalue far
The airy honours thou art married to.
Bel. O, peace ! for you speak sharpness to my soul,

More torturous than hell's plagues to the damned.
For love's sake, hear me speak!
Scud. For love's sake? no:
Love is my surfeit, and is turned in me
To a disease.
Bel. Tyrant! my knees shall beg,
Till they get liberty for my tongue to speak,
Drowned, almost, in the rivers of mine eyes.
Scud. What canst thou say? art thou not married?
Bel. Alas! I was enforced; first by the threats
Of a severe father, that in his hand
Did gripe my fortunes: next to that, the fame
Of your neglect and liberal-talking tongue,
Which bred my honour an eternal wrong.
Scud. Pish! these are painted[1] causes. Till this morn
He lived not in this land, that durst accuse
My integrity of such an ignorance.
But take your letters here, your paper vows,
Your picture and your bracelets; and if ever
I build again upon a woman's faith,
May sense forsake me! I will sooner trust
Dice or a reconciled enemy: O God!
What an internal joy my heart has felt,
Sitting at one of these same idle plays,
When I have seen a maid's inconstancy
Presented to the life! how my glad eyes
Have stole about me, fearing lest my looks
Should tell the company convented there
The mistress that I had free of such faults.
Bel. O, still retain her so! dear Scudmore, hear me.
Scud. Retain thee so? it is impossible!
Art thou not married? 'tis impossible!
O no! I do despise thee, and will fly
As far on earth as to the Antipodes,
And by some learned magician, whose deep art
Can know thy residence on this hemisphere,

[1] Pretended.

There I'll be placed, my feet just against thine,
To express the opposite nature which our hearts
Must henceforth hold.

Bel. O, rather shoot me, friend,
Than let me hear thee speak such bitterness!
O, pity me! redeem me from the hell,
That in this marriage I am like to feel!
I'll rather fly to barren wildernesses,
And suffer all wants with thee, Scudmore, than
Live with all plenty in this husband's arms.
Thou shalt perceive I am not such a woman,
That is transported with vain dignities.
O, thy dear words have knocked at my heart's gates,
And entered. They have plucked the devil's vizard
(That did deform this face, and blind my soul)
Off, and thy Bellafront presents herself,
Laved in a bath of contrite virginal tears:
Clothed in the original beauty that was thine!
Now, for thy love to God, count this not done:
Let time go back, and be as when before it,
Or from thy memory rase it for ever!

Scud. Ha, ha! heart! was there ever such strange creatures framed?
Why dost thou speak such foolish, senseless things?
Can thy forsaking him redeem thy fault?
No, I will never mend an ill with worse.
Why, thy example will make women false,
When they shall hear it, that before were true;
For after ill examples we do fly,
But must be vowed to deeds of piety.
O woman, woman, woman, woman, woman!
The cause of future and original sin,
How happy, (had you not) should we have been!
False, where you kiss, but murdering in your ire;
Love all can woo, know all men you desire:
Ungrateful, yet most impudent to crave,
Torturous as hell, insatiate as the grave:

Lustful as monkeys, grinning in your ease,
Whom if we make not idols, we ne'er please:
More vainly proud than fools, as ignorant;
Baser than parasites: witches that enchant
And make us senseless, to think death or life
Is yours to give, when only our belief
Doth make you able to deceive us so:
Begot by drunkards to breed sin and woe;
As many foul diseases hide your veins,
As there are mischiefs coined in your quick brains:
Not quick in wit, fit to perform least good,
But to subvert whole states, shed seas of blood:
Twice as deceitful as are crocodiles,
For you portray both ways, with tears and smiles.
Yet questionless there are as good, as bad.
Hence! let me go.

Bel. Hear me, and thou shalt go.
I do confess I do deserve all this,
Have wounded all the faith my sex doth owe,
But will recover it or pay my life.
Strive not to go, for you shall hear me first.
I charge thee, Scudmore, thou hard-hearted man,
Upon my knees— [*Kneels.*
Thou most implacable man, since penitence
And satisfaction too gets not thy pardon,
I charge thee use some means to set me free,
[*Rises again.*
Before the revels of this night have end.
Prevent my entering to this marriage-bed;
Or by the memory of Lucretia's knife,
Ere morn I'll die a virgin, though a wife. [*Exit.*

Scud. Pish! do: the world will have one mischief less.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Garden adjoining a Bowling Alley.*

Enter Sir ABRAHAM NINNY, *throwing down his bowl.*

Abra. Bowl they that list, for I will bowl no more.
Cupid, that little bowler, in my breast
Rubs at my heart, and will not let me rest.
[*Within:* Rub, rub, fly, fly [1]
Ay, ay, you may cry "Rub, fly," to your bowls,
For you are free: love troubles not your jowls,
But from my head to heel, from heel to heart:
Behind, before, and roundabout I smart.
Then in this arbour, sitting all alone,
In doleful ditty let me howl my moan.
O boy! [2] leave pricking, for I vail my bonnet: [3]
Give me but breath, while I do write a sonnet.

Enter PENDANT.

Pen. I have lost my money, and Sir Abraham too. Yonder he sits at his muse, by Heaven, drowned in the ocean of his love. Lord! how he labours, like a hard-bound poet whose brains had a frost in 'em. Now it comes.

Abra. "I die, I sigh."

Pen. What, after you are dead? very good.

Abra. "I die, I sigh, thou precious stony jewel."

Pen. Good; because she is hard-hearted.

Abra. "I die." [*Writes.*

Pen. He has died three times, and come again.

Abra. —— "I sigh, thou precious stony jewel.
Wearing of silk, why art thou still so cruel." [*Writes.*

Pen. O Newington [4] conceit!
And quieting eke.

[1] The exclamations of the bowlers, whom Sir Abraham has just quitted.—*Collier.*

[2] Cupid.

[3] A translation of the French *Avaler le bonnet.* *Avaler* is from *aval, i.e.* ad vallem, the same root being seen in *avalanche.* Vail (to lower) occurs in various combinations in old plays.

[4] The theatre at Newington Butts is first mentioned in Henslowe's

Abra. "Thy servant Abraham, sends this foolish ditty."

Pen. You say true, in troth, sir.

Abra. "Thy servant, Abraham, sends this foolish dit-
Ty unto thee, pity both him and it." [*Writes.*

Pen. "Ty unto thee:" well, if she do not pity both 'tis pity she should live.

Abra. "But if thou still wilt poor Sir Abraham frump,
Come, grim death, come! here give thy mortal thump."
[*Reads.*

So; now I'll read it together.

"I die, I sigh, thou precious stony jewel,
O, wherefore wear'st thou silk, yet art so cruel?
To thee thy Ninny sends this foolish dit-
Ty, and . . . . pity both him and it.[1]
If thou deny, and still Sir Abraham frump,
Come, grim death, come! here give thy mortal thump."
Let me see, who shall I get now to set it to a dumpish note.[2]

Pen. In good faith, I do not know; but nobody that is wise, I am sure of that. It will be an excellent matter sung to the knacking of the tongs. But to my business. God save thee, worthy and right worshipful Sir Abraham! what, musing and writing? O, this love will undo us all, and that made me prevent love, and undo myself. But what news of Mistress Lucida? ha! will she not come off, nor cannot you come on, little Abraham?

Diary under date of the year 1594, when *The Jew of Malta*, *Hamlet* (the old version), *Titus Andronicus*, *Tamburlaine* and many other plays were acted there. How long it remained under Henslowe's management we do not know. Apparently in Field's time the theatre was not in good repute.

[1] There is a blank in this line in the old copy. Sir Abraham seems as fastidious as most versifiers, and it will be observed, that in reading over his "sonnet" he makes a variety of alterations. Perhaps the blank was left to show that he could not fill it up to his satisfaction, not liking the line as it stood, when he first committed it to paper—

"Ty *unto thee*, pity both him and it." —*Collier.*

[2] John Dowland was the favourite composer of the day. His *Lachmyæ* seems (as its title would suggest) to have been of a peculiarly "dumpish" nature.

Abra. Faith, I have courted her, and courted her; and she does, as everybody else does, laughs at all I can do or say.

Pen. Laughs; why that's a sign she is pleased. Do you not know, when a woman laughs, she's pleased?

Abra. Ay, but she laughs most shamefully and most scornfully.

Pen. Scornfully! hang her, she's but a bauble.

Abra. She's the fitter for my turn, sir; for they will not stick to say, I am a fool, for all I am a knight.[1]

Pen. Love has made you witty, little Nab; but what a mad villain art thou, a striker, a fiftieth part of Hercules, to get one wench with child, and go a-wooing to another.

Abra. With child! a good jest, i' faith: whom have I got with child?

Pen. Why, Mistress Wagtail is with child, and will be deposed 'tis yours. She is my kinswoman, and I would be loth our house should suffer any disgrace in her; if there be law in England, which there should be, if we may judge by their consciences, or if I have any friends, the wench shall take no wrong. I cannot tell: I think my lord will stick to me.

Abra. D'ye hear? talk not to me of friends, law, or conscience: if your kinswoman say she is with child by me, your kinswoman is an errant whore. Od's will, have you nobody to put your gulls upon but knights? That Wagtail is a whore, and I'll stand to it.

Pen. Nay, you have stood to it already. But to call my cousin whore! you have not a mind to have your throat cut, ha' you?

Abra. Troth, no great mind, sir.

Pen. Recant your words, or die. [*Draws his sword.*

Abra. Recant? O, base! out, sword, mine honour keep: Love, thou hast made a lion of a sheep.

[1] Alluding to the bauble or truncheon, usually with a head carved at the top of it, part of the insignia of the ancient licensed fool or jester.—*Collier.*

Pen. But will you fight in this quarrel?

Abra. I am resolved.

Pen. Heart! I have pulled an old house over my head: here's like to be a tall[1] fray. I perceive a fool's valianter than a knave at all times. Would I were well rid of him: I had as lief meet Hector, God knows, if he dare fight at all: they are all one to me; or, to speak more modernly, with one of the roaring boys.[2] [*Aside.*

Abra. Have you done your prayers?

Pen. Pray give me leave, sir: put up, an't please you. Are you sure my cousin Wagtail is a whore?

Abra. With sword in hand I do it not recant.

Pen. Well, it shall never be said Jack Pendant would venture his blood in a whore's quarrel. But, whore or no whore, she is most desperately in love with you: praises your head, your face, your nose, your eyes, your mouth: the fire of her commendations makes the pot of your good parts run over; and to conclude, if the whore have you not, I think the pond at Islington[3] will be her bathing-tub, and give an end to mortal misery. But if she belie you——pray, put up, sir; she is an errant whore, and so let her go.

Abra. Does she so love me, say you?

Pen. Yes, yes: out of all question, the whore does love you abominable.

Abra. No more of these foul terms: if she do love me,
That goes by fate, I know it by myself.
I'll not deny but I have dallied with her.

Pen. Ay, but hang her, whore; dallying will get no children.

[1] *i.e.* In the slang sense.

[2] Riotous bullies like the "rangers of Turnbull" (see Ben Jonson's Jordan Knockem in *Bartholomew Fair*) who are introduced in the *Amends for Ladies*.

[3] Frequent allusion is made by the old dramatists to the ducking-ponds at Islington. In Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, Master Stephen says, "I shall keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury, or the citizens that come ducking to Islington ponds."

Abra. Another "whore," and draw! Where is the girl?

Pen. Condoling her misfortune in the gallery;
Upon the rushes sitting all alone,
And for Sir Abraham's love venting her moan.

Abra. I know not what to say: fate's above all.
Come, let's go overhear her. Be this true,
Welcome, my Wagtail: scornful Luce, adieu. [*Exit.*

Pen. One way it takes yet. 'Tis a fool's condition,
Whom none can love, out of his penury
To catch most greedily at any wench
That gives way to his love, or feigns her own
First unto him: and so Sir Abraham now,
I hope, will buy the pool where I will fish.
Thus a quick knave makes a fat fool his dish. [*Exit.*

Enter Captain POUTS.

Pouts. I have played the melancholy ass, and partly the knave, in this last business, but as the parson said that got the wench with child, "'Tis done now, sir; it cannot be undone, and my purse or I must smart for it."

Enter Servant.

Ser. Your trunks are shipped, and the tide falls out about twelve to-night.

Pouts. I'll away. This law is like the basilisk, to see it first is the death on't.[1] This night and, noble London, farewell; I will never see thee more, till I be knighted for my virtues. Let me see, when shall I return? and yet I do not think, but there are a great many dubbed for their virtues; otherwise, how could there be so many poor knights?[2]

Enter STRANGE, *like a* Soldier, *amazedly.*

What art thou? what's thy news?

Strange. 'Zoons; a man is fain to break open doors,

[1] Perhaps "on us" would be better.
[2] A hit at the indiscriminate creation of knights by James I.

ere he can get in to you. I would speak with a general sooner.

Pouts. Sir, you may: he owes less, peradventure; or if more, he is more able to pay't. What art?

Strange. A soldier; one that lives upon this buff jerkin: 'twas made of Fortunatus's pouch; and these are the points I stand upon. I am a soldier.

Pouts. A counterfeit rogue you are.

Strange. As true a rogue as thyself. Thou wrong'st me. Send your man away: go to, I have strange and welcome business to impart. The merchant is dead for shame: let's walk into the fields: send away your man.

Pouts. How?

Strange. Here is a letter from the lusty Kate,
That tells you all: I must not give it you,
But upon some conditions. Let us walk,
And send away your man.

Pouts. Go, sirrah, and bespeak supper at the Bear,[1] and provide oars: I'll see Gravesend to-night.

[*Exit* Servant.

Strange. The gentlewoman will run mad after you then. I'll tell you more: let's walk. [*Exeunt.*

[1] A celebrated tavern just below London Bridge whence boats plied to Greenwich and Gravesend. The "Cranes, or the Bear at the Bridgefoot," were to be the taverns at which Sir Dauphine (in the *Silent Woman*, II. iii.) might "be drunk in fear."

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* NEVILL'S *House.*

Enter SCUDMORE *and* NEVILL.

NEV. I see great'st spirits can serve to their own ends.
Were you the seeming servingman that passed by?

Scud. By my sad heart, I was; and not a tittle
Of my relation to thee wrong or feigned.

Nev. In troth you were to blame to venture so.
Mischiefs find us: we need not mischiefs seek.

Scud. I am not tied to that opinion,[1]
They are like women, which do always shun
Their lovers and pursuers, and do follow
With most rank appetites them that do fly:
All mischief that I had is but one woman,
And that one woman all mischance to me:
Who speaks worst of them, then's the best of men.
They are like shadows: mischiefs are like them.
Death fears me, for in troth I seek him out.
The sun is stale to me; to-morrow morn,
As this, 'twill rise: I see no difference,
The night doth visit me but in one robe,
She brings as many thoughts as she wears stars,

[1] This is the first line of Scudmore's answer; but in the old copy that and the eighteen lines following it are given to Nevill.—*Collier.*

When she is pleasant, but no rest at all.
For what new strange thing should I covet life, then?
Is not she false, whom only I thought true?
Shall time to show his strength make Scudmore live,
Till (perish the vicious thought!) I love not thee,
Or thou, dear friend, remove thy heart from me?

Nev. Time is as weak for that, as he is old.
Take comfort, and attend this counsel, friend:
This match is neither sacred nor is sure;
Close fate annihilates what opinion makes,
And since she is resolved this night to die,
If you do not redeem her, give the means,
Or her blood (credit me) will spring heavier griefs,
Sorer and stranger, in thy oppressed heart,
Than her false love before. Besides, 'tis you,
My Scudmore, that are false, if you will not
Consent to let her make vows good, which were
But in a possibility to be broke.[1]
This her repentance casts her vice quite off,
And if you leave her now, you take it on.
Nay, you incur a bloody mortal sin:
You do become an actual murderer.
If you neglect her, she will kill herself
This night by poison, knife, or other means.
God gives you power to cross her desperate will,
And if you save not, where you may, you kill.

Scud. Why, can my noble and wise friend think still
That what a woman says her heart doth mean?
Can you believe that she will kill herself?
'Tis a full hour since she spake the word,
And God forbid, that any woman's mind
Should not be changed and changed in a long hour.
She is by this time in her lordly arms,
And, like pleased Juno clasped by Jupiter,
Forgets the plaints of poor mortality:
Such state, such pride, as poets show her in,

[1] *i.e.* Her treachery was not absolutely completed.

Incensed with Jove's loose 'scapes upon the earth,
She cast on me at our encountering.
As cold and heavy as a rock of ice,
In her love to me, which while I there stayed,
My bitter and hot words resolved [1] a little:
Just as the sun doth ice I softened her,
And made her drown her fault in her own tears.
But think you she holds this flexible vein?
No, I'm removed, and she's congealed again.

New. How well does Scudmore speak ill for himself!

Wit's a disease that fit employment wants;
Therefore we see those happiest in best parts,
"But under-born in fortune to their merits," [2]
Grow to a sullen envy, hate, and scorn
Of their superiors; and at last, like winds,
Break forth into rebellious civil wars
Or private treasons; none so apt for these
As melancholy wits, fettered with need.
How free's the rustic swain from these assaults!
He never feels a passion all his life,
But when he cannot sleep, or hunger gripes;
And though he want reason, wit, art,—nay, sense,
Is not so senseless to capitulate,
And ask God why he made not him as great
As that same foolish lord or that rich knave.
His brain with nothing does negotiate,
But his hard husbandry, which makes him live.
But have we worthy gifts, as judgment, learning,
Ingenious sharpness (which wise God indeed
Doth seldom give out of His equal hand,
But joined with poverty, to make it even
With riches, which he clogs with ignorance),
We vent our blessing in profane conceits,

[1] Dissolved.

[2] *i.e.* Whose fortune does not equal their merits. This is at least sense, which the old reading "and under born fortunes under their merits" can scarcely claim to be.

Foul bawdry, or strong arguments against
Ourselves, and stark blindly hold it best
Rather to lose a soul than lose a jest.
Scud. Ill terms my friend this wit in any man;
For that, but seasoned with discretion,
Holds him in awe of all these blemishes,
Frees him of envy, doth philosophise
His spirit, that he makes no difference
'Twixt man and man, 'twixt fortunes high and low,
But as the thicker they with virtues grow.
Freedom and bondage wit can make all one;
So 'twould by being left and being loved,
If I had any of it tempered so.
But you have spoke all this, condemning me
For having wit to speak against myself,
But I'll be ruled by you in all.
Nev. Then thus.
To-night by promise I do give a masque,
As to congratulate the bridal day,
In which the count, Pendant, and the wise knight
Will be most worthy dancers: sir, you shall
Learn but my part, which I will teach you too,
As nimbly as the usher did teach me,
And follow my further directions.
Though I, i' th' morn, were a[1] prodigious wight,
I'll give thee Bellafront in thine arms to-night.
Scud. I am your property, my engineer.
Prosper your purposes! shine, thou eye of Heaven,
And make thy lowering morn a smiling even! [*Exeunt.*

[1] *i.e.* A prodigious fool. Hazlitt changes to "no prodigious wight."

SCENE II.—*Lambeth Fields.*

Enter Captain POUTS, *with a letter, and* STRANGE, *like a* Soldier.

Strange. O, these are Lambeth fields.

Pouts. Strange murdered on the wedding-day by you,
At his own bride's appointment, for my sake?

Strange. As dead as charity.

Pouts. This sounds not well.

Strange. 'Zoons! you may say as well I am the man,
As doubt he lives. A plague of your belief!
D'ye know this bloody ruff, which she has sent,
Lest you should be incredulous, and this ring
Which you have seen her wear?

Pouts. I know the ring,
And I have seen the ruff about his neck.
This comes of enforced marriages. Where was't done?
And how escaped you?

Strange. Sir, receive it briefly.
I am her kinsman, and being newly come
Over, and not intending to stay long,
Took this day to go see my cousin Worldly
(For so my name is), where I found all of them
So deeply drenchèd in the bridal cup,
That sleep had ta'en possession of their eyes.
Bacchus had given them such an overthrow,
Their bodies lay like slaughtered carcases;
One here, one there, making such antic faces
As drunkenness had mocked at drunkenness.
In troth, their postures and their sleep, like death
(For theirs was liker death than sober sleep),
Remembered me of body-scattered fields,
After the bloody battles I have seen.
'Twas such a season, to make short my tale,
As Fate had said, "Now murders may be done
And ne'er revealed." Approaching further, I
Lighted upon a chamber, where your love

Sat by this merchant, cast drunk on the bed—
She weeping and lamenting her mishap,
Assured both of my daring and my trust,
Fell flat upon the ground, then raised herself,
Hung on my neck, then sunk down to my legs,
Told all things passed to-day, and never ceased,
Till I had ta'en life from that half-dead man
Before, whom straight I strangled with this rope.

Pouts. You have showed some kindness to me :
I must love you, sir. What did you with his body ?

Strange. Having first,
By her direction, put on these his clothes,
That like the murdered man the safelier
I might pass with her, being her husband's shape,
If any of the servants had been waked,
She showed me to a necessary vault,
Within a closet in the chamber too,
And there I threw the body.

Pouts. Whence this blood ?

Strange. That she herself first let out of his veins;
Wherein she dipped the ruff about his neck,
And said, "Go, bear this ensign of my love,
To assure him what I dared for his dear sake."

Pouts. Where is the maid ?

Strange. Captain, a maid for you !
(But well you know, I hope, she is no maid)
But maid or no maid, she is at my mother's,
Whence I will bring her whither you'll appoint
To-night ; and let this tide convey all hence,
For staying will be something perilous.

Pouts. I will kill two men for you ; till then
I owe my life to you, and if ever racks,
Strappadoes, wheel, or any torturous engine,
Even from the Roman yoke to the Scotch boot,[1]
Force me discover you or her to law,
Pray God the merchant may respire again.

[1] A well-known instrument of torture.

But what a villain have I been to wrong her!
Did she not tell you how I injured her?

Strange. She said you challenged her, and publicly
Told you had lain with her; but truth's no wrong.

Pouts. Truth! 'twas more false than hell, and you shall see me
(As well as I can repent of any sin)
Ask her forgiveness for wounding of her name,
And 'gainst the world recover her lost fame.
Kind soul! would I could weep to make amends!
Why, I did slander her at the church-door.

Strange. The more base villain thou. [*Strikes him.*

Pouts. Ha! what's the news?

Strange. Thou unspeakable rascal! thou, a soldier!
A captain of the suburbs, a poor foist,[1]
That with thy slops and cat-a-mountain face,
Thy bladder-chops and thy robustious words,
Fright'st the poor whore, and terribly dost exact
A weekly subsidy, twelvepence apiece,
Whereon thou liv'st; and on my conscience,
Thou snapp'st besides with cheats and cutpurses.

Pouts. Heart! this is some railing poet. Why, you rogue!

Strange. Thou rogue—far worse than rogues—thou slanderer!

Pouts. Thou worse than slanderous rogues; thou murderer!

Strange. 'Tis well-remembered; I will cut thy throat,
To appease that merchant's soul, which ne'er will rest
Till some revenge be taken on thy tongue.

Pouts. I'll kill thee first, and in thy vital flood
Wash my hands clean of that young merchant's blood.
[*They fight.*

Strange. You fight, as if you had fought afore.
I can still hold my sword: come on, sir.

[1] A rogue and also a pickpocket. The verb is often used in the sense of "tricking, cheating."

Pouts. 'Zoons! can you ward so well? I think you are
One of the noble science of defence.

Strange. True, o' th' science of noble defence I am,
That fight in safeguard of a virtuous name.

[POUTS *falls.*

Pouts. O, now I understand you, and you stand over me. My hurts are not mortal, but you have the better. If your name be Worldly, be thankful for your fortune.

Strange. Give me thy sword, or I will kill thee.

Pouts. Some wiser than some! I love my reputation well, yet I am not so valiant an ass but I love my life better. There's my sword.

Strange. Then get upon my back: come, all shall be well.
I'll carry thee unto a surgeon first,
And then unto thy wench. Come, we are friends.

Pouts. God-a-mercy. 'Zoons! methinks I see myself in Moorfields,[1] upon a wooden leg, begging threepence.

Strange. I thank thee, Heaven, for my success in this.
To what perfection is my business grown!
Seldom or never is right overthrown.

[*Exit with* Captain POUTS *on his back.*

Enter PENDANT, *and* Mistress WAGTAIL, *sewing a purse.*

Pen. They say every woman has a springe to catch a woodcock; remember my instructions, and let me see what a paradise thou canst bring this fool into. Fifteen hundred a year, wench, will make us all merry; but a fool to boot! why, we shall throw the house out at window. Let me see, there are two things in this foolish, transitory world which should be altogether regarded: profit and pleasure, or pleasure and profit—I know not which to place first, for indeed they are twins, and were born together. For profit, this marriage (God speed it!) marries

[1] A noted resort of beggars, lepers, and outcasts generally; see *The Alchemist*, I., i., end of scene.

you to it; and for pleasure, if I help you not to that as cheap as any man in England, call me cut.[1] And so remember my instructions, for I'll go fetch Sir Abraham.

[*Exit.*

Wag. Your instructions! Nay, faith, you shall see I have as fruitful a brain as a belly: you shall hear some additions of my own. My fantasy even kicks like my bastard: well, boy, for I know thou art masculine, neither thy father nor thy mother had any feminine quality but one, and that was to take a good thing when it was proffered. When thou inherit'st land, strange both to thy father and grandfather, and rid'st in a coach, it may be thy father, an old footman, will be running by thy side. But yonder comes the gentle knight and my squire.

Enter SIR ABRAHAM *and* PENDANT *stealthily.*

Wag. Unfortunate damsel! why dost thou love
Where thou hast sworn it never to reveal?
Maybe he would vouchsafe to look on thee.
Because he is a knight, is it thy terror?
Why, peradventure, he is Knighthood's Mirror.[2]

Pen. D'ye hear, Sir Abraham?

Abra. Yes, with standing tears.

Wag. Bevis on Arundel, with Morglay in hand,
Near to my knight in prowess doth not stand.
They say Sir Bevis slew both boar and dragon,
My knight for that can drink up a whole flagon,
A thing as famous now amongst our men,
As killing monsters was accounted then.
'Tis not the leg, no, were it twice as good,
Throws me into this melancholy mood;

[1] A proverbial phrase and a term of reproach, "cut" being commonly used to designate a horse with a cut tail.

[2] The allusions here are to the well-known romance, *The Mirror of Knighthood.* Bevis is Bevis of Hampton; Arundel was his horse, Morglay his sword. See *The Picture* by Massinger, II., i.

Yet let me say and swear, in a cross-garter
Paul's never showed to eyes a lovelier quarter.

Abra. Ay, but all this while she does not name me she may mean somebody else.

Pen. Mean somebody else! you shall hear her name you by and by.

Wag. Courteous Sir Abraham.

Pen. La ye there!

Wag. O, thy very name,
Like to a hatchet, cleaves my heart in twain.
When first I saw thee in those little breeches,
I laughed for joy, but when I heard thy speeches,
I smiled downright, for I was almost frantic,
A modern knight should be so like an antic
In words and deeds. Those pinken-eyes[1] of thine,
For I shall ne'er be blest to call them mine—

Abra. Say not so, sweetheart.

Wag. How they did run, not rheumaticly run,
But round about the room, one over one!
That wide mouth? no, small: no, but middle-size,
That nose dominical, that head, like——wise.

Pen. Very good: d'ye mark that head likewise?

Abra. She has an excellent wit.

Pen. I'll now in to her, sir: observe what follows. Now, turtle, mourning still for the party? for whom are you working that purse?

Abra. For me, I warrant her. [*Aside.*

Wag. What news, good cousin? I hope you have not revealed my love.

Pen. Yea, faith, I have acquainted the knight with all; and thou may'st be ashamed to abuse a gentleman so slanderously. He swears he ne'er lay with you.

Wag. Lie with me? alas! no, I say not so, nor no man living; but there was one night above the rest, that I

[1] Printed "pinkanies" in the old copy. Commonly a term of endearment. The adjective is used in *The Virgin Martyr*, II. i., in a contemptuous sense, perhaps to mean effeminate—"that pink-an-eye jackanapes boy, her page."

dreamt he lay with me; and did you ne'er hear of a child begot in a dream?

Abra. By this light, that very night I dreamt she lay with me. [*Aside.*

Pen. Ay, but Sir Abraham is no dreaming knight: in short, he contemns you, he scorns you at his heels.

Abra. By God, so he lies. I have the most ado to forbear, but that I would hear a little more.

Pen. And has sent this halter. You may hang yourself, or you may cut your throat: here's a knife, too.

Wag. Well, I will love him in despite of all,
Howe'er he uses me! 'tis not the shame
Of being examined or the fear of whipping—

Pen. Make as if thou wouldst kill thyself. [*Aside.*

Wag. —Should move me, would but he vouchsafe his love.
Bear him this purse, filled with my latest breath.
[*Blows in it.*
I loved thee, Abraham Ninny, even in death.
[*Offers to stab herself.*

Abra. Hold! hold! thy knight commands thee for to I sent no halter. Poor soul, how it pants! [hold.
Take courage, look up.

Pen. Look, Sir Abraham in person comes to see you.

Wag. O, let me die, then, in his worship's arms!

Abra. Live long and happy to produce thy baby:
I am thy knight, and thou shalt be my lady.
Frown, dad, fret, mother, so my love look cheerly:
Thou hast my heart, and thou hast bought it dearly;
And for your pains, if Abraham live t' inherit,
He will not be unmindful of your merit.
Wear thou this ring, whilst I thy labours task:
This purse wear in my cap, anon i' th' masque.

Wag. O happy woman!

Abra. To supper let's, and merry be as may be.

Pen. Now, God send every wise knight such a lady.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Sir JOHN WORLDLY'S *House.*

Enter BELLAFRONT.

BEL. Titles and state, d'ye call it? O content!
Thou art both beauty, means, and all in marriage.
Joy dwells not in the princes' palaces:
They that envy 'em do not know their cares.
Were I the queen of gold, it could not buy
An hour's ease for my oppressèd heart.
O, were this wedlock knot to tie again,
Not all the state and glory it contains,
Joined with my father's fury, should enforce
My rash consent! but, Scudmore, thou shalt see
This false heart (in my death) most true to thee.
[*Shows a knife hanging by her side.*
My lord, my father, all the company,
Did note my sudden sadness now at supper;
Yet came I out, and put on feignèd mirth,
And mean to sit out this night's revels, too,
To avoid all suspect may grow in 'em,
Lest my behaviour should my intent reveal:
Our griefs, like love, we hardly can conceal.
Yon come my sisters. Are the masquers ready?

Enter LUCIDA, *with her willow garland on, and* KATHERINE.

Luc. They are gone to dress themselves. Master Nevill's come.
I would I had not vowed to live a maid!
I am a little taken with that gentleman,
And yet if marriage be so full of ill,
Let me be married to my garland still.

Kath. In troth, thy state is happier much than ours.
Were never two like us unfortunate!

Luc. Thy case indeed I needs must pity much,
Because I think thy virtue slanderèd;
But for my lady sister, if she reap
Sad discontent, 'tis none's but her own fault:
I knew the passages 'twixt her and Scudmore.

Bel. Sister, I wonder you will name a man
I think not on: he was no match for me.
Why d'ye blame me, that should rather blame
Your wandering eye, to love a man loved me?

Luc. Well, 'tis too late now to expostulate.[1]
But, my poor little Kate, where is thy man?

Kath. Lost, lost, in troth: to-morrow I shall hear,
I make account, he's gone some five-years' voyage,
Till this disgrace of ours be overblown;
And for my Captain Pouts, by this time he
Is ten mile on the river toward Gravesend.

Enter Sir JOHN WORLDLY *with* Servants, *with torches and cudgels.*

Sir J. Wor. Stand you two there. Sirrah, go with me.
Why, how now, girls! here still? what, and your ladyship?
Away! away, I say: go take your places.
Some torches for my lady! You sirrah,
[*Exeunt* BELLAFRONT, LUCIDA, *and* KATE.
Is my Lady Ninny awake yet?

[1] To discuss the matter.

Ser. Yes, sir, she is awake, but she is scant sober: the first thing she called for was her aquavitæ bottle.

Sir J. Wor. Who is with her?

Ser. The good Sir Innocent and her gentlewoman.

Sir J. Wor. Go, tell 'em I desire their company,
The masque stays on 'em, say; and d'ye hear,
The sides of one o' th' chairs must be let out
For her great ladyship.

Ser. Marry, shall it, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter NEVILL, Count FREDERICK, PENDANT, *and* Sir ABRAHAM, *in their masquing robes:* Sir ABRAHAM *gnawing a capon's leg.*

Nev. Soul! man, leave eating now. look, look! you have all dropped o' your suit.

Abra. O sir, I was in love to-day, and could not eat; but here's one knows the case is altered. Lend me but a handkerchief to wipe my mouth, and I ha' done.

Nev. Soul! how this rascal stays with the rest of our things.

Sir J. Wor. How now, son count? what, ready, Master Nevill?

Nev. All ready, ready; only we tarry for our vizards and our caps: I put 'em to a knave to do, because I would have 'em the better done.

Abra. If you put 'em to a knave, you are like to have 'em the worse done.

Nev. Your wit is most active: I called him knave in regard of his long stay, sir, not his work.

Abra. But, d'ye hear, Master Nevill? did you bespeak a vizard with a most terrible countenance for me?

Nev. A very devil's face: I fear nothing, but that it will fright the women.

Abra. I would it would. And a huge moustachios?

Nev. A very Turk's.

Abra. Excellent!

Count F. But do you think he will come at all?

All. O, there he is.

Scud. [*Within*]. By your leave! stand back, by your leave!

Enter SCUDMORE, *like a* Vizard-Maker.

Nothing can be done to-night, if I enter not.

2nd Ser. Stand back there, or I'll burn you.

Scud. 'Twere but a whorish trick, sir.

3rd Ser. O sir, is't you? Heart! you will be killed.

Scud. Marry, God forbid, sir.

Nev. Pray, forbear; let me speak to him.
O, you use us very well.

Scud. In good faith, I have been so troubled about this gentleman's scurvy face (I take it), 'tis wonderful.

Abra. Well, are you fitted now?

Nev. Fitted at all points.

Count F. Where are the caps?

Scud. Here, sir.

Pen. Let me see mine.

Count F. Come, help me on with mine.

Abra. This is a rare face to fright the maids i' th' country! Here now I'll pin my purse. Come, help me on.

Nev. So, so, away! mine being on, I'll follow you.

All. Pray, make haste.

[*Exeunt* Sir JOHN WORLDLY, Sir ABRAHAM, Count FREDERICK *and* PENDANT.

Nev. So, that door's fast, and they are busied
About their charge. On with this robe of mine,
This vizard and this cap: help me a little.

[*They change habits.*

Scud. At first change I must tell her who I am.

Nev. Right; 'tis agreed, I (leading of the masque)
Should dance with Bellafront.

Scud. And at the second
I come away with her, and leave them dancing,
And shall find you at the back door.

Nev. The rest,
That follows, is digested in my breast.
Ser. What would you do? stand back,
Unless you can eat torches!

Re-enter Count FREDERICK, PENDANT, Sir ABRAHAM, *in their masquing robes.*

Count F. Come, come! away for shame!
Scud. 'Tis such a tedious rascal. So ha' wi' ye.
[*Exeunt* Masquers.
Sir J. Wor. Thou hast well fitted 'em, though thou mad'st 'em stay.
Nev. I forbid any man to mend 'em, sir. Good night unto your worship.
Sir J. Wor. Wilt not stay?
Nev. Alas, sir! I have another to set forth
This very night. By your leave, my masters. [*Exit.*
2nd Ser. By your leave! by your leave! you'll let a man go out?
Sir J. Wor. Now, go with me, and let all in that will.
[*Exit with them, and run in three or four.*

SCENE II.

Enter Servants *setting chairs and stools. Loud music, at which enter* Sir JOHN WORLDLY, Sir INNOCENT, NINNY, BELLAFRONT, LUCIDA, KATHERINE, Lady NINNY *and* Mistress WAGTAIL. *They seat themselves.* Lady NINNY *offers at*[1] *two or three chairs, and at last finds the great one; they point at her and laugh. As soon as she is seated, she drinks from her bottle. The music plays, and the* Masquers *enter. After one strain* SCUDMORE *takes* BELLAFRONT, *who*

[1] *i.e.* Tries.

seems unwilling to dance. Count FREDERICK *takes* LUCIDA; PENDANT, KATE; Sir ABRAHAM, Mistress WAGTAIL: SCUDMORE, *as they stand* (*the others courting too*), *whispers as follows*:—

Scud. I am your Scudmore. [*Soft music.*

Bel. Ha!

Scud. By Heaven, I am.
Be ruled by me in all things.

Bel. Even to death.

Abra. 'Sfoot! Did you not know me by my purse?

Wag. I should ne'er have known you by that, for you wear it on your head, and other folks in their pockets.

Lady Nin. Which is my lord, I pray?

Sir J. Wor. The second man:
Young Nevill leads.

Sir Inn. And where's Sir Abraham?

Sir J. Wor. He with the terrible visage.

Lady Nin. Now, out upon him to disfigure himself so:
And 'twere not for my bottle, I should swoon.

[*Music; they dance the second strain, during which* SCUDMORE *goes away with* BELLAFRONT.

All the Spectators. Good, very good!

[*The other four dance another strain, honour and end.*

Count F. But where's the bride and Nevill?

All. Ha!

Abra. 'Ware tricks!

Sir J. Wor. O, there they come: it was their parts to do so.

Re-enter SCUDMORE *unvizarded*, BELLAFRONT, *with pistols and the right* Parson.

Count F. This Nevill? This is Scudmore.

All. How?

Count F. But here's my lady

Scud. No, my gentlewoman.
Abra. 'Zoons! treason! I smell powder.
Bel. In short, know
That I am married to this gentleman,
To whom I was contracted long ago.
This priest the inviolable knot hath tied.
What ease I find being unladified! [*Aside.*
Count F. What riddle's this?
Sir Inn. 'Ware the last statute of two husbands.[1]
Scud. and Bel. Pish!
Count F. This is the very priest that married me:
Is it not, sister?

Enter NEVILL, *also dressed like a* Parson.

Nev. No.
Abra. Lord bless us! here is conjuring!
Lend me your aqua-vitæ bottle, good mother.
Sir J. Wor. Heyday!
The world's turned upside down. I have heard and seen
Two or three benefices to one priest, or more,
But two priests to one benefice ne'er before.
Pen. Married not you the earl?
Par. Bona fide, no.
Sir J. Wor. You did, then?
Nev. Yes.
Count F. I have the privilege, then?
Sir J. Wor. Right, you were married first.
Scud. Sir John, you doat,
This is a devil in a parson's coat.
[NEVILL *puts off his* Parson's *weeds; and shows a* Devil's *robe under.*
All. A pretty emblem!
Nev. Who married her, or would have caused her marry,
To any man but this, no better was;

[1] Technically the statute 1 James I. c. 11, by which bigamy was made a felony.

Let circumstances be examinèd.
Yet here's one more: and now I hope you all
Perceive my marrying not canonical.

[*Slips off his* Devil's *weeds.*

All. Nevill, whoop!

Count F. Heart! what a deal of knavery a priest's cloak can hide. If it be not one of the honestest, friendliest cozenages that e'er I saw, I am no lord.

Kath. Life! I am not married, then, in earnest.

Nev. So, Mistress Kate, I kept you for myself.

Sir J. Wor. It boots not to be angry.

Sir Inn. and Lady Nin. No, faith, Sir John.

Enter STRANGE *like a* Soldier, *with* Captain POUTS *on his back.*

2nd Scr. Whither will you go with your calf on your back, sir?

Sir J. Wor. Now, more knavery yet?

Strange. Prythee, forbear, or I shall do thee mischief. By your leave, here is some sad to your merriment. Know you this captain?

All. Yes, very well.

Kath. O sister, here's the villain slandered me.

Strange. You see he cannot stand to't.

Abra. Is he hurt in the arm, too?

Strange. Yes.

Abra. Why, then, by God's-lid, thou art a base rogue. I knew I should live to tell thee so.

Lady Nin. Sir Abraham, I say!

All. Heaven is just.

Pouts. What a rogue are you!
Is this the surgeon you would carry me to?

Strange. Confess your slander, and I will, I swear.

Pouts. Nay, 'tis no matter, I'll cry quittance with you. Forgive me, Mistress Kate, and know, all people,
I lied not with her, but belied her once:

And to my recantation that same soldier
Enforced my hand.

Strange. Yes, here 'tis, Mistress Kate.

[*They all look on the paper.*

Pouts. I see now how I am cheated. Love him well.
He has redeemed your honour with his sword.

Sir J. Wor. But where is Strange, my son? O, was he here,
He should be married new to make all sure.

Kath. O my divining spirit, he's gone to sea!

Pouts. This cunning in her is exceeding good.
Your son—your husband Strange is murdered.

All. How?

Strange. Peace, peace! For Heaven's sake, peace!
Come, sir, I'll carry you to a surgeon.
Here's gold to stop thy throat. For God's sake, peace!

Pouts. Sirrah, you have brought me to a surgeon already:
I'll be even with you.

Kath. Of all men living I could marry thee,
Were not my heart given to another man.
Sir, you do speak of Strange?

Pouts. These women are as crafty as the devil
Yes, I did speak of him: Sir John, my lord,
Know Strange is murdered by that villain's hand,
And by his wife's consent.

All. How?

Sir J. Wor. God forbid!

Pouts. Search presently the closet and the vault,
There you shall find his body: 'tis too true.
The reason all may guess: her husband, wanting
Spirit to do on me what he hath done,
In hope to marry her, he hath murdered him.

Kath. To marry me! No, villain: I do hate him
On this report worse than I do thyself;
And may the plagues and tortures of a land
Seize me if this be not an innocent hand.

Sir J. Wor. 'Fore God, 'tis most like truth. Son Scudmore, pray
Look to this fellow: gentlemen, assist.
Torches! some torches! I'll go search myself.

Sir Inn. I will assist you.

Count F. But I pray, sir, how came you unto this knowledge?

Pouts. From his mouth.

Strange. I'll save your labour, and discover all.
Thou perjured villain, didst not swear thou wouldst not
Discover me?

Pouts. I but swore in jest.

Strange. Nay, but remember, thou didst wish Strange living,
If ever thou didst tell.

Pouts. Sir, all is true,
And would my punishment would ease my conscience.

Sir J. Wor. To Newgate with him! hence! take her along.
Out, murderers! whore, thou art no child of mine!
Fetch constable and officers. Away!

Strange. Sir, do but hear me speak.

Sir J. Wor. Fetch officers!

Pouts. Go fetch a surgeon.

Strange. Sir, you are then too violent. I will bail her.
[*Discovers himself.*

Kath. O my dear Strange!

Sir J. Wor. My son!

Scud., Luc., Bel. Brother!

All. Young Strange!

Pouts. Heart! I was never sick before: help me now to a surgeon, or I shall swoon instantly.
[*Two of them lead him.*

Thou wert born a woman-citizen; fare thee well.
And farewell, love and women, ye diseases:
My horse and sword shall be my mistresses,
My horse I'll court, my sword shall lie with me. [*Exit.*

Strange. The way to cure lust is to bleed, I see.

Count F. Tell him all, Scudmore, whilst I go a-wooing again. Sir John, will you go along, and my two worshipful elders, I pray, be your witnesses. Priest, go not you away. Heart! I have so ruminated on a wife that I must have one this night, or I shall run proud.

[NEVILL, SCUDMORE, BELLAFRONT, STRANGE, *and* KATHERINE, *whisper on one side.* PENDANT, Sir ABRAHAM, *and* WAGTAIL *on the other.*

Mistress Lucida, you did once love me; if you do still, no more words, but give me your hand. Why are ye doubtful?

Abra. Ne'er look upon me, Mistress Lucida; time was, time is, and time's passed.[1] I'll none of you now; I am otherwise provided.

Pen. Well spoken, Brazen-head! now or never, Sir Abraham.

Abra. Then first, as duty binds, I crave consent
Of my two parents dear: if ay, say so;
If not, I'll ha' her whether you will or no.

Sir Inn. How? how?

Lady Nin. I hope you will not.

Abra. Ma'am, I am resolved: you have a humour of your aqua-vitæ bottle, why should not I have a humour in a wife?

Sir J. Wor. An old man were a fitter match for her: He would make much of her.

Abra. Much on her? I know not what ye call much making on her, I am sure I have made two on her.

Pen. And that an old man cannot do, I hope.

Nev. O thou beyond Lawrence of Lancashire.[2]

[1] Referring to the story of Friar Bacon and his Brazen Head.

[2] A boisterous, clownish character in the play of *The Lancashire Witches*, by Heywood and Brome. It was not printed until 1634. Either Lawrence was a person who figured in that transaction, and whose name is not recorded, or (which is not impossible) the play was written very long before it was printed.—*Collier.*

Sir Inn. Come, come, you shall not.

Abra. Speak not in vain ; I am too sure to change,
For hand and heart are sure : *Ecce signum.*
And this have I done, and never lay with her.

Sir J. Wor. Nay, then, 'tis too late ;
Tis sure : 'tis vain to cross the will of fate.

Sir Inn. and Lady Nin. Well, well, God bless you.

[ABRAHAM *and* WAGTAIL *kneel.*

Abra. Thanks, reverend couple, and God bless withal
The little Ninny that herein doth sprawl.
Parson, you shall despatch us presently :
Lord, how soberly you stand !

Parson. Now truly I could ne'er stand drunk in my life.

Strange. Strange and most fortunate, we must have a new Tuck[1] then.

Count F. Is it a match ?

Luc. 'Tis done.

Count F. Then Bacchus squeeze grapes with a plenteous hand.
Parson, you'll take some pains with us to-night.
Come, brothers, come : fly, willow, to the woods,
And, like the sea, for healths let's drink whole floods.

Strange. I consecrate my deed unto the city,
And hope to live myself to see the day
It shall be shown to people in a play.

Scud. And may all true love have like happy end.
Women, forgive me ; men, admire my friend.

Sir J. Wor. On, parson, on ; and, boy, outvoice the music.[2]
Ne'er was so much (what cannot heavenly powers ?)
Done and undone and done in twelve short hours.

[*Exeunt.*

[1] Friar Tuck.

[2] Perhaps the play originally ended with a song by a boy, in which the rest joined chorus.—*Collier.*



AMENDS FOR LADIES.





FIELD'S second comedy, *Amends for Ladies*, was published in 1618, as acted at the Blackfriars Theatre, both by the Prince's servants and the Lady Elizabeth's. Another edition appeared in 1639.

Sir John Loveall's expedient for testing his wife's fidelity may have been borrowed in part from the novel of the "Curioso Impertinente" in *Don Quixote*, and Bold's attempt in disguise on the Lady Bright is supposed to be taken from a contemporary incident in real life.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE COUNT, Father of Lord FEESIMPLE.
LORD FEESIMPLE.
LORD PROUDLY.
SIR JOHN LOVEALL.
SUBTLE, his Friend.
INGEN, in love with Lady HONOUR.
FRANK, his younger Brother.
BOLD, in love with Lady BRIGHT.
WELLTRIED, his Friend.
SELDOM, a Citizen.
WHOREBANG, BOTS, TEARCHAPS, SPILLBLOOD, } Roarers.
PITTS, DONNER, } Serjeants.
Parson, Page, Drawer, &c.

LADY HONOUR, a Maid.
LADY PERFECT, } Sister of Lord PROUDLY, wife of Sir JOHN LOVEALL.
LADY BRIGHT, a Widow.
GRACE, Wife of SELDOM.
MOLL CUT-PURSE.

SCENE—LONDON.



AMENDS FOR LADIES.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Sir JOHN LOVEALL'S *House.*

Enter Lady HONOUR, Lady PERFECT, *and* Lady BRIGHT.

LADY HON. A wife the happiest state? It cannot be.

L. Per. Yes, such a wife as I, that have a man
As if myself had made him: such a one
As I may justly say, I am the rib
Belonging to his breast. Widow and maid,
Your lives compared to mine are miserable,
Though wealth and beauty meet in each of you.
Poor virgin, all thy sport is thought of love
And meditation of a man; the time
And circumstance, ere thou canst fix thy thoughts
On one thy fancy will approve.

L. Hon. That trouble
Already may be passed.

L. Per. Why, if it be,
The doubt he will not hold his brittle faith,
That he is not a compatible choice,

And so your noble friends will cross the match,
Doth make your happiness uncertain still;
Or, say you married him, what he would prove.
Can you compare your state, then, to a wife?

L. Hon. Nay, all the freedom that a virgin hath
Is much to be preferred. Who would endure
The humours of so insolent a thing
As is a husband? Which of all the herd
Runs not possessed with some notorious vice,
Drinking or whoring, fighting, jealousy,
Even of a page at twelve or of a groom
That rubs horse-heels? Is it not daily seen,
Men take wives but to dress their meat, to wash
And starch their linen: for the other matter
Of lying with them, that's but when they please:
And whatsoe'er the joy be of the bed,
The pangs that follow procreation
Are hideous, or you wives have gulled your husbands
With your loud shriekings and your deathful throes.
A wife or widow to a virgin's life!

L. Bright. Why should the best of you think ye enjoy
The roost[1] and rule, that a free widow doth?
I am mine own commander, and the bliss
Of wooers and of each variety
Frequents me, as I were a maid. No brother
Have I to dice my patrimony away, as you,
My maiden-madam, may. No husband's death
Stand I in doubt on; for thanks be to Heaven,
If mine were good, the grievous loss of him
Is not to come; if he were bad, he's gone,
And I no more embrace my injury.
But be yours ill, you nightly clasp your hate;
Or good—why, he may die or change his virtue.
And thou, though single, hast a bed-fellow
As bad as the worst husband—thought of one;
And what that is men with their wives do do,

[1] Collier reads "rest."

And long expectance till the deed be done.
A wife is like a garment used and torn:
A maid like one made up, but never worn.

L. Hon. A widow is a garment worn threadbare,
Selling at second-hand, like broker's ware.
But let us speak of things the present time
Makes happy to us, and see what is best.
I have a servant then, the crown of men,
The fountain of humanity, the prize
Of every virtue, moral and divine;
Young, valiant, learnèd, well-born, rich, and shaped,
As if wise Nature, when she fashioned him,
Had meant to give him nothing but his form;
Yet all additions are conferred on him,
That may delight a woman: this same youth
To me hath sacrificed his heart, yet I
Have checked his suit, laughed at his worthy service,
Made him the exercise of my cruelty,
Whilst constant as the sun, for all these clouds,
His love goes on.

Enter INGEN.

L. Bright. Peace, here's the man you name.

L. Per. Widow, we'll stand aside.

Ingen. Good morrow to the glory of our age,
The Lady Perfect and the Lady Bright,
[*Meeting* Lady PERFECT *and* Lady BRIGHT.[1]
The virtuous wife and widow; but to you,
The Lady Honour and my mistress,
The happiness of your wishes.

L. Hon. By this light,
I never heard one speak so scurvily,
Utter such stale wit, and pronounce so ill.
"But to you, my Lady Honour and my mistress,
The happiness of your wishes!"

Ingen. Stop your wit;

[1] They retire soon afterwards, but the *exit* is not marked—*Collier.*

You would fain show these ladies, what a hand
You hold over your servant: 't shall not need;
I will express your tyranny well enough.
I have loved this lady since I was a child,
Since I could construe *Amo:* now she says
I do not love her, 'cause I do not weep,
Lay mine arms o'er my heart, and wear no garters,
Walk with mine eyes in my hat, sigh and make faces
For all the poets in the town to laugh at.
Pox o' this howling love! 'tis like a dog
Shut out at midnight. Must love needs be powdered,
Lie steeped in brine, or will it not keep sweet?
Is it like beef in summer?

L. Hon. Did you ever
Hear one talk fustian like a butcher thus?

Ingen. 'Tis foolish, this same telling folks we love:
It needs no words, 'twill show itself in deeds;
And did I take you for an entertainer,
A lady that will wring one by the finger,
Whilst on another's toes she treads, and cries
"By gad, I love but one, and you are he,"
Either of them thinking himself the man,
I'd tell you in your ear, put for the business,
Which granted or denied, "Madam, God be wi' ye."

L. Hon. Come, these are daily slanders that you raise
On our infirm and unresisting sex:
You never met, I'm sure, with such a lady.

Ingen. O, many, by this light. I've seen a chamber
Frequented like an office of the law:
Clients succeed at midnight one another,
Whilst the poor madam hath been so distressed
Which of her lovers to show most countenance to,
That her dull husband has perceived her wiles.

L. Hon. Nay, perhaps taught her: many of those husbands
Are base enough to live upon't.

Ingen. I have seen another of 'em

Cheat, by this light, at cards, and set her women
To talk to the gentlemen that played,
That, so distracted, they might oversee.
L. Hon. O, fie upon ye! I dare swear you lie.
Ingen. Do not, fair mistress; you will be forsworn.
L. Hon. You men are all foul-mouthed: I warrant, you
Talk thus of me and other ladies here
Because we keep the city.
Ingen. O, profane!
That thought would damn me. Will you marry yet?
L. Hon. No, I will never marry.
Ingen. Shall we then
Couple unlawfully? for indeed this marrying
Is but proclaiming what we mean to do;
Which may be done privately in civil sort,
And none the wiser; and by this white hand,
The rack, strappado, or the boiling boot[1]
Should never force me tell to wrong your honour.
L. Hon. May I believe this?
Ingen. Let it be your creed.
L. Hon. But if you should prove false? Nay, ne'er unhang
Your sword, except you mean to hang yourself.
Why, where have you been drinking? 'sfoot, you talk
Like one of these same rambling boys that reign
In Turnbull[2] Street.
Ingen. How do you know?
L. Hon. Indeed, my knowledge is but speculative,
Not practic there; I have it by relation
From such observers as yourself, dear servant.
I must profess I did think well of thee,
But get thee from my sight, I never more
Will hear or see thee, but will hate thee deadly,

[1] A variation, perhaps, on the "Scotch boot," mentioned in *Woman is a Weathercock.*

[2] Variously spelt Turnbull and Turnbole, the proper name being Turnmill Street. It was near Clerkenwell Green, and a noted resort of thieves, ruffians, etc.

As a man-enemy, or a woman turned.
Ladies, come forth.

Re-enter Lady BRIGHT *and* Lady PERFECT.

See, sir, what courtesy
You have done to me: a strange praise of you
Had newly left my lips just as you entered,
And how you have deserved it with your carriage!
Villain! thou hast hurt mine honour to these friends,
For what can they imagine but some ill
Hath passed betwixt us by thy broad discourse?
Were my case theirs, by virgin chastity,
I should condemn them. Hence! depart my sight!

Ingen. Madam, but hear me. O, that these were men,
And durst but say or think you ill for this!
I have so good a cause upon my side
That I would cut their hearts out of their breasts,
And the thoughts out of them that injured you.
But I obey your hest, and for my penance
Will run a course never to see you more:
And now I lose you, may I lose the light,
Since in that beauty dwelt my day or night.

[*Exit* INGEN.

L. Bright. Is this the virtuous youth?

L. Per. Your happiness?

L. Bright. Wherein you thought your seat so far 'bove ours.

L. Hon. If one man could be good, this had been he.
See, here come all your suitors and your husband;
And, room for laughter! here's the Lord Feesimple.
What gentlewoman does he bring along?

Enter Sir JOHN LOVEALL, *embracing* SUBTLE; Lord FEESIMPLE, *with* BOLD *disguised as a* Waiting Gentlewoman, *and* WELLTRIED. WELLTRIED, Sir JOHN, *and* SUBTLE, *talk with* Lady PERFECT.

L. Fee. One-and-thirty good morrows to the fairest,

wisest, richest widow that ever conversation coped[1] withal.

L. Bright. Threescore and two unto the wisest lord
That ever was trained in university.

L. Fee. O courteous, bounteous widow! she has outbid me thirty-one good morrows at a clap.

Well. But, my Lord Feesimple, you forget the business imposed on you.

L. Fee. Gentlewoman, I cry thee mercy; but 'tis a fault in all lords, not in me only: we do use to swear by our honours, and as we are noble, to despatch such a business for such a gentleman; and we are bound, even by the same honours we swear by, to forget it in a quarter of an hour, and look as if we had never seen the party when we meet next, especially if none of our gentlemen have been considered.

Well. Ay, but all yours have, for you keep none, my lord: besides, though it stands with your honour to forget men's businesses, yet it stands not with your honour if you do not do a woman's.

L. Fee. Why then, madam, so it is that I request your ladyship to accept into your service this gentlewoman. For her truth and honesty I will be bound; I have known her too long to be deceived.—This is the second time I have seen her. [*Aside.*

L. Hon. Why, how now, my lord! a preferrer of gentlewomen to service, like an old knittingwoman? where hath she dwelt before?

L. Fee. She dwelt with young Bold's sister, he that is my corrival[2] in your love. She requested me to advance her to you, for you are a dubbed lady; so is not she yet.

Well. But now you talk of young Bold—when did you see him, lady?

L. Bright. Not this month, Master Welltried.
I did conjure him to forbear my sight;
Indeed, swore if he came, I'd be denied.

[1] Encountered. [2] A partner in affection.

But 'tis strange you should ask for him: ye two
Were wont never to be asunder.

Well. Faith, madam, we never were together, but
We differed on some argument or other;
And doubting lest our discord might at length
Breed to some quarrel, I forbear him too.

L. Fee. He quarrel? Bold? hang him, if he durst have quarrelled, the world knows he's within a mile of an oak has put him to't, and soundly. I never cared for him in my life, but to see his sister: he's an ass, pox! an arrant ass; for do you think any but an arrant ass would offer to come a-wooing where a lord attempts? He quarrel!—he dares not quarrel.

Well. But he dares fight, my lord, upon my knowledge:
And rail no more, my lord, behind his back,
For if you do, my lord, blood must ensue. [*Draws.*

L. Fee. O, O, my honour dies! I am dead. [*Swoons.*

Well. Ud's light, what's the matter? wring him by the nose.

L. Bright. A pair of riding spurs, now, were worth gold.

L. Hon. Pins are as good. Prick him, prick him.

L. Fee. O, O!

L. Per. He's come again, lift him up.

All. How fares your lordship?

L. Fee. O friends, you have wronged my spirit to call it back:
I was even in Elysium at rest.

Well. But why, sir, did you swoon?

L. Fee. Well, though I die, Master Welltried, before all these I do forgive you, because you were ignorant of my infirmity. O sir! is't not up yet? I die again! Put up, now, whilst I wink, or I do wink for ever.

Well. 'Tis up, my lord; ope your eyes: but, I pray, tell me, is this antipathy 'twixt bright steel and you natural, or how grew it.

L. Fee. I'll tell you, sir: anything bright and edged works thus strongly with me. Your hilts, now, I can handle as boldly, look you else.

Sir John. Nay, never blame my lord, Master Welltried, for I know a great many will swoon at the sight of a shoulder of mutton or a quarter of lamb. My lord may be excused, then, for a naked sword.

Well. This lord and this knight in dog-collars would make a fine brace of beagles.

L. Hon. But, on my faith, 'twas mightily overseen of your father, not to bring you up to foils—or if he had bound you 'prentice to a cutler or an ironmonger.

L. Fee. Ha, pox! hang him, old gouty fool! He never brought me up to any lordly exercise, as fencing, dancing, tumbling and such like; but, forsooth, I must write and read, and speak languages, and such base qualities, fit for none but gentlemen. Now, sir, would I tell him, "Father, you are a count, I am a lord. A pox o' writing and reading, and languages! Let me be brought up as I was born."

Sub. But how, my lord, came you first not to endure the sight of steel?

L. Fee. Why, I'll tell you, sir. When I was a child, an infant, an innocent[1]—

L. Hon. 'Twas even now. [*Aside.*

L. Fee. I being in the kitchen, in my lord my father's house, the cook was making minced pies: so, sir, I standing by the dresser, there lay a heap of plums. Here was he mincing: what did I, sir, being a notable little witty coxcomb, but popped my hand just under his chopping-knife, to snatch some raisins, and so was cut o'er the hand, and never since could I endure the sight of any edge-tool.

L. Bright. Indeed, they are not fit for you, my lord. And now you are all so well satisfied in this matter, pray, ladies, how like you this my gentlewoman?

[1] *i.e.* A fool

L. Hon. In truth, madam, exceedingly well, I. If you be provided, pray, let me have her.

L. Per. It should be my request, but that I am full.

L. Bright. What can you do? What's her name, my lord?

L. Fee. Her name? I know not. What's her name, Master Welltried?

Well. Her name? 'Slid, tell my lady your name.

Bold. Mistriss Mary Princox, forsooth.

L. Bright. Mistress Mary Princox. She has wit, I perceive that already. Methinks she speaks as if she were my lord's brood.

Bold. Brood, madam? 'Tis well known I am a gentlewoman. My father was a man of five hundred per annum, and he held something *in capite* too.

Well. So does my lord something.

L. Fee. Nay, by my troth, what I hold *in capite* is worth little or nothing.

Bold. I have had apt breeding, however my misfortune now makes me submit myself to service; but there is no ebb so low but hath his tide again. When our days are at worst, they will mend in spite of the frowning destinies, for we cannot be lower than earth; and the same blind dame that hath cast her blear eyes hitherto upon my occasions may turn her wheel, and at last wind them up with her white hand to some pinnacle that prosperously may flourish in the sunshine of promotion.

L. Fee. O mouth, full of agility! I would give twenty marks now to any person that could teach me to convey my tongue (*sans* stumbling) with such dexterity to such a period. For her truth and her honesty I am bound before, but now I have heard her talk, for her wit I will be bound body and goods.

L. Bright. Ud's light, I will not leave her for my hood. I never met with one of these eloquent old gentlewomen before. What age are you, Mistress Mary Princox?

Bold. I will not lie, madam. I have numbered fifty-seven summers, and just so many winters have I passed.

Sub. But they have not passed you; they lie frozen in your face.

Bold. Madam, if it shall please you to entertain me, so; if not, I desire you not to misconstrue my goodwill. There's no harm done; the door's as big as it was, and your ladyship's own wishes crown your beauty with content. As for these frumping gallants, let them do their worst. It is not in man's power to hurt me. 'Tis well known I come not to be scoffed. A woman may bear and bear, till her back burst. I am a poor gentlewoman, and since virtue hath nowadays no other companion but poverty, I set the hare's head unto the goose giblets, and what I want one way, I hope I shall be enabled to supply the other.

L. Fee. An't please God, that thou wert not past children.

L. Bright. Is't even so, my lord? Nay, good Princox, do not cry. I do entertain you. How do you occupy? What can you use?

Bold. Anything fit to be put into the hands of a gentlewoman.

L. Bright. What are your qualities?

Bold. I can sleep on a low stool. If your ladyship be talking in the same room with any gentleman, I can read on a book, sing love-songs, look up at the loover light,[1] hear and be deaf, see and be blind, be ever dumb to your secrets, swear and equivocate, and whatsoever I spy, say the best.

L. Bright. O rare crone, how art thou endued! But why did Master Bold's sister put you away?

Bold. I beseech you, madam, to neglect that desire: though I know your ladyship's understanding to be sufficient to partake, or take in, the greatest secret can be imparted, yet—

[1] *i.e.* Skylight.

L. Bright. Nay, prythee, tell the cause. Come, here's none but friends.

Bold. Faith, madam, heigho! I was (to confess truly) a little foolish in my last service to believe men's oaths, but I hope my example, though prejudicial to myself, will be beneficial to other young gentlewomen in service. My mistress's brother (the gentleman you named even now— Master Bold), having often attempted my honour, but finding it impregnable, vowed love and marriage to me at the last. I, a young thing and raw, being seduced, set my mind upon him, but friends contradicting the match, I fell into a grievous consumption; and upon my first recovery, lest the intended sacred ceremonies of nuptials should succeed, his sister, knowing this, thought it fit in her judgment we should be farther asunder, and so put me out of her service.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

L. Bright. God-a-mercy for this discovery, i'faith.
O man, what art thou when thy cock is up?
Come, will your lordship walk in? 'tis dinner-time.

Enter SELDOM, *hastily, with papers.*

All. Who's this? who's this?

L. Hon. This is our landlord, Master Seldom, an exceeding wise citizen, a very sufficient understanding man, and exceeding rich.

All. Miracles are not ceased.

L. Bright. Good morrow, landlord. Where have you been sweating?

Sel. Good morrow to your honours: thrift is industrious. Your ladyship knows we will not stick to sweat for our pleasures; how much more ought we to sweat for our profits; I am come from Master Ingen this morning, who is married, or to be married; and though your ladyship did not honour his nuptials with your presence, he hath by me sent each of you a pair of gloves, and Grace Seldom, my wife, is not forgot. [*Exit.*

All God give him joy, God give him joy.

[*Exeunt all but* Lady HONOUR, Lady PERFECT, Sir JOHN LOVEALL, *and* SUBTLE.

L. Hon. Let all things most impossible change now!
O perjured man! oaths are but words, I see.
But wherefore should not we, that think we love
Upon full merit, that same worth once ceasing,
Surcease our love too, and find new desert?
Alas! we cannot; love's a pit which, when
We fall into, we ne'er get out again:
And this same horrid news which me assaults,
I would forget: love blanches blackest faults.
O, what path shall I tread for remedy
But darkest shades, where love with death doth lie!
[*Aside and exit.*

L. Per. Sir, I have often heard my husband speak
Of your acquaintance.

Sir John. Nay, my virtuous wife,
Had it been but acquaintance, this his absence
Had not appeared so uncouth: but we two
Were school-fellows together, born and nursed,
Brought up, and lived since, like the Gemini:
Had but one suck: the tavern or the ordinary,
Ere I was married, that saw one of us
Without the other, said we walked by halves.
Where, dear, dear friend, have you been all this while?

Sub. O most sweet friend, the world's so vicious,
That had I with such familiarity
Frequented you, since you were married,
Possessed and used your fortunes as before,
As in like manner you commanded mine,
The depraved thoughts of men would have proclaimed
Some scandalous rumours from this love of ours,
As saying mine reflected on your lady;
And what a wound had that been to our souls,
When only friendship should have been the ground

To hurt her honour and your confident peace,
Spite of mine own approved integrity?

Sir John. Wife, kiss him, bid him welcome: pox o' th' world!

Come, come, you shall not part from me in haste.
I do command thee use this gentleman
In all things like myself: if I should die,
I would bequeath him in my will to thee.

L. Per. Sir, you are most welcome, and let scandalous tongues
No more deter you: I dare use you, sir,
With all the right belonging to a friend,
And what I dare, I dare let all men see.
My conscience, rather than men's thoughts, be free.

Sir John. Will you look in? We'll follow you.

[*Exit* Lady PERFECT.

Now, friend,
What think you of this lady?

Sub. Why, sweet friend,
That you are happy in her: she is fair;
Witty, and virtuous, and was rich to you.
Can there be an addition to a wife?

Sir John. Yes, constancy; for 'tis not chastity
That lives remote, from all attempters free;
But there 'tis strong and pure, where all that woo
It doth resist, and turns them virtuous too.
Therefore, dear friend, by this, love's masculine kiss,
By all our mutual engagements passed,
By all the hopes of amity to come,
Be you the settler of my jealous thoughts,
And make me kill my fond suspect of her
By assurance that she is loyal, otherwise
That she is false; and then, as she's past cure,
My soul shall ever after be past care.
That you are fittest for this enterprise,
You must needs understand; since, prove she true
In this your trial, you (my dearest friend),

Whom only rather than the world besides,
I would have satisfied of her virtue, shall see[1]
And best conceal my folly. Prove she weak,
'Tis better you should know't than any man,
Who can reform her, and do me no wrong.
Chemical metals, and bright gold itself,
By sight are not distinguished, but by the test:
Thought makes good wives, but trial makes the best.
To the unskilful owner's eyes alike
The Bristow[2] sparkles as the diamond,
But by a lapidary the truth is found—
Come, you shall not deny me.

Sub. Do not wrong
So fair a wife, friend, and so virtuous,
Whose good name is a theme unto the world:
Make not a wound with searching, where was none.
Misfortune still such projects doth pursue;
He makes a false wife that suspects a true.
Yet since you so importune, give me leave
To ruminate awhile, and I will straight
Follow, and give you an answer.

Sir John. You must do it. [*Exit.*

Sub. Assure yourself, dear coxcomb, I will do't,
Or strangely be denied. All's as I wished;
This was my aim, although I have seemed strange.
I know this fellow now to be an ass,
A most unworthy husband, though in view
He bear himself thus fair; she knows this too,
Therefore the stronger are my hopes to gain her;
And, my dear friend, that will have your wife tried,
I'll try her first, then trust her, if I can;
And, as you said most wisely, I hope to be
Both touchstone to your wife and lapidary. [*Exit.*

[1] The old copies read "be," but by changing to "see," and putting the full stop after "folly," Mr. Hazlitt has made excellent sense of the lines.

[2] A brilliant stone resembling diamond, found at St. Vincent's Rocks near Bristol, and once much used for cheap jewellery.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.—*Inside* SELDOM'S *Shop.*

Enter SELDOM *and his* Wife GRACE.

MIS. SEL. Husband, these gloves are not fit for my wearing; I'll put 'em into the shop, and sell 'em: you shall give me a plain pair for them.

Sel. This is wonderful, wonderful! this is thy sweet care and judgment in all things: this goodness is not usual in our wives. Well, Grace Seldom, that thou art fair is nothing, that thou art witty is nothing, that thou art a citizen's wife is nothing; but, Grace, that thou art fair, that thou art wellspoken, and that thou art witty, and that thou art a citizen's wife, and that thou art honest, I say—and let any man deny it that can, it is something, it is something; I say, it is Seldom's something, and for all the sunshine of my joy, mine eyes must rain upon thee.

Enter MOLL CUTPURSE,[1] *with a letter.*

Moll. By your leave, Master Seldom, have you done the hangers I bespake for the knight?

[1] The "Roaring Girl," of Middleton and Dekker (in which play she appears to much greater advantage than here), and a well-known character. Her real name was Mary Frith. She was born in 1584, and died somewhere about 1659. She commonly wore man's clothes

Mis. Sel. Yes, marry have I, Mistress *hic*[1] and *hæc*, I'll fetch 'em to you. [*Exit.*

Moll. Zounds! does not your husband know my name? if it had been somebody else, I would have called him cuckoldy slave.

Mis. Sel. If it had been somebody else, perhaps you might.

Moll. Well, I may be even with him; all's clear. Pretty rogue, I have longed to know thee this twelve months, and had no other means but this to speak with thee. There's a letter to thee from the party.

Mis. Sel. What party?

Moll. The knight, Sir John Love-all.

Mis. Sel. Hence, lewd impudent!
I know not what to term thee, man or woman,
For, Nature, shaming to acknowledge thee
For either, hath produced thee to the world
Without a sex: some say thou art a woman,
Others a man: and many, thou art both
Woman and man, but I think rather neither,
Or man and horse, as the old centaurs were feigned.

Moll. Why, how now, Mistress What-lack-ye? are you so fine, with a pox? I have seen a woman look as modestly as you, and speak as sincerely, and follow the friars as zealously, and she has been as sound a jumbler as e'er paid for't: 'tis true, Mistress Fi'penny, I have sworn to leave this letter.

and was alike bully, thief, bawd, and receiver of stolen goods. She assisted to rob General Fairfax on Hounslow Heath, and in Feb. 1611–12, did penance at St. Paul's Cross for some offence of which no record exists. Her notoriety was such that some of the dogs used for baiting bulls and bears in Paris Garden were called after her. At her death she left £20 for the conduit to run with wine on the anticipated restoration of Charles II. Dyce in his *Middleton*, vol. ii., pp. 429–31, gives a sketch of her life, and quotes a number of references to her from contemporary works; amongst them the supposed allusion in *Twelfth Night*, I., iii. 137.

[1] *i.e.* Because she is dressed as a man.

Mis. Sel. D'ye hear, you Sword-and-target (to speak in your own key), Mary Ambree,[1] Long Meg,[2]

Thou that in thyself, methinks, alone
Look'st like a rogue and whore under a hedge;
Bawd, take your letter with you, and begone,
When next you come, my husband's constable,
And Bridewell is hard by: you've a good wit,
And can conceive—

Enter SELDOM, *with hangers.*

Look you, here are the hangers.

Moll. Let's see them.

Fie, fie! you have mistook me quite,
They are not for my turn. B'w'ye', Mistress Seldom.

[*Exit.*

Enter Lord PROUDLY.

Mis. Sel. Here's my Lord Proudly.

L. Proud. My horse, lackey! is my sister Honour above?

Sel. I think her ladyship, my lord, is not well, and keeps her chamber.

L. Proud. All's one, I must see her: have the other ladies dined?

Mis. Sel. I think not, my lord

L. Proud. Then I'll take a pipe of tobacco here in your shop, if it be not offensive. I would be loth to be thought to come just at dinner-time. [*To his* Servant] *Garçon*! fill, sirrah.

[1] Often referred to as a typical Virago, *e.g.*, by Ben Jonson, *The Silent Woman*, IV., i. A ballad entitled "Mary Ambree," is given in Percy's *Reliques*. Possibly she is alluded to in Butler's couplet:

"A bold Virago, stout and tall
As Joan of France, or English Mall."
Hudibras, Part I., ii., 367.

[2] Is Long Meg of Westminster, also a masculine lady of great notoriety, and after whom a cannon in Dover Castle, and a large flag-stone in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey are still called.—*Collier.* See *post* p. 437, respecting a play of this name.

Enter Page, *with a pipe of tobacco.*

What said the goldsmith for the money?

[SELDOM, *having fetched a candle, walks off to the other end of the shop.* Lord PROUDLY *sits by* GRACE.

Page. He said, my lord, he would lend no man money that he durst not arrest.

L. Proud. How got that wit into Cheapside, trow? He is a cuckold. Saw you my lady to-day? What says she? [*Takes tobacco.*

Page. Marry, my lord, she said her old husband had a great payment to make this morning, and had not left her so much as a jewel.

L. Proud. A pox of her old cat's chaps! The teeth Have made a transmigration into hair: [she had She hath a bigger beard than I, by this light.

[*Whispers to* GRACE

Sel. This custom in us citizens is good:
Thus walking off, when men talk with our wives;
It shows us courteous and mannerly.
Some count it baseness; he's a fool that does so.
It is the highest point of policy,
Especially when we have virtuous wives.

Mis. Sel. Fie, fie! you talk uncivilly, my lord.

L. Proud. Uncivilly, mew,; can a lord talk uncivilly? I think you, a finical taffata pipkin, may be proud I'll sit so near it. Uncivilly, mew! [sure.

Mis. Sel. Your mother's cat has kittened in your mouth,

L. Proud. Prythee, but note yon fellow. Does he not walk and look as if he did desire to be a cuckold?

Mis. Sel. But you do not look as if you could make him one. Now they have dined, my lord.

Enter Lord FEESIMPLE *and* WELLTRIED.

L. Fee. God save your lordship.

L. Proud. How dost thou, coz? Hast thou got and more wit yet?

L. Fee. No, by my troth, I have
But little money with that little wit I have,
And the more wit ever the less money;
Yet as little as I have of either,
I would give something that I durst but quarrel:
I would not be abused thus daily as I am.

Well. Save you, my lord.

L. Proud. Good Master Welltried, you can inform me: pray, how ended the quarrel betwixt young Bold and the other gentleman?

Well. Why, very fairly my lord; on honourable terms. Young Bold was injured and did challenge him, fought in the field, and the other gave him satisfaction under his hand. I was Bold's second, and can show it here.

L. Proud. 'Tis strange there was no hurt done, yet I
The other gentleman far the better man. [hold

Well. So do not I.

L. Proud. Besides, they say the satisfaction that walks in the ordinaries is counterfeit.

Well. He lies that says so, and I'll make it good.
And for I know my friend is out of town,
What man soever wrongs him is my foe.
I say he had full satisfaction,
Nay, that which we may call submission;
That the other sought peace first; and who denies this,
Lord, knight or gentleman: English, French or Scot,
I'll fight and prove it on him with my sword.

L. Fee. No, sweet Master Welltried, let's have no fighting, till (as you have promised) you have rid me from this foolish fear, and taught me to endure to look upon a naked sword.

Well. Well, and I'll be as good as my word.

L. Fee. But do you hear, cousin Proudly? They say my old father must marry your sister Honour, and that he will disinherit me, and entail all his lordships on her and the heir he shall beget on her body. Is't true or not?

L. Proud. There is such a report.

L. Fee. Why, then I pray God he may die an old cuckoldy slave.
O world, what art thou? where is parent's love?
Can he deny me for his natural child?
Yet see (O fornicator!) old and stiff,
Not where he should be, that's my comfort yet.
As for you, my lord, I will send to you as soon as I dare fight, and look upon steel; which, Master Welltried, I pray let be with all possible speed.

L. Proud. What d'ye this afternoon?

L. Fee. Faith, I have a great mind to see Long Meg[1] and the Ship at the Fortune.

L. Proud. Nay, i' faith, let's up and have a rest at primero.[2]

Well. Agreed, my lord; and toward the evening I'll carry you to the company.

L. Fee. Well, no more words.

[*Exeunt* Lord PROUDLY, Lord FEESIMPLE, *and* WELLTRIED.

Mis. Sel. I wonder, sir, you will walk so, and let anybody sit prating to your wife. Were I a man, I'd thrust em out o' th' shop by the head and shoulders.

Sel.[3] There was no policy in that, wife; so should I lose my custom. Let them talk themselves weary, and give thee love-tokens—still I lose not by it.
Thy chastity's impregnable, I know it.
Had I a dame, whose eyes did swallow youth,

[1] It is tolerably evident that two plays (one called *Long Meg*, and the other *The Ship*), and not one with a double title, are here intended to be spoken of. This may seem to disprove Malone's assertion (*Shakespeare* by Boswell, iii. 334), that only one piece was represented on one day. By Henslowe's Diary it appears that *Longe Mege of Westminster* was performed at Newington in February 1594, and, according to Field, it must have continued for some time popular. Nothing is known of a dramatic piece of that date called *The Ship*. It may have been only a jig, often given at the conclusion of plays.—*Collier.*

[2] A game at cards.

[3] Seldom's theories as given in the following speech remind one of the courtier's Song of the Citizen in the *Fatal Dowry*, IV. ii.; possibly the scene in which the song occurs was by Field.

Whose unchaste gulf together did take in
Masters and men, the footboys and their lords,
Making a gallimaufry [1] in her blood,
I would not walk thus then: but, virtuous wife,
He that in chaste ears pours his ribald talk
Begets hate to himself, and not consent;
And even as dirt, thrown hard against a wall,
Rebounds and sparkles in the thrower's eyes,
So ill words, uttered to a virtuous dame,
Turn and defile the speaker with red shame. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Sir JOHN LOVEALL'S *House.*

Enter Sir JOHN LOVEALL *and* Lady PERFECT.

Sir John. Zounds! you're a whore; though I entreat
Before his face, in compliment or so, [him fair
I not esteem him truly as this rush.
There's no such thing as friendship in the world,
And he that cannot swear, dissemble, lie,
Wants knowledge how to live, and let him die.

L. Per. Sir, I did think you had esteemed of him,
As you made show; therefore I used him well,
And yet not so, but that the strictest eye
I durst have made a witness of my carriage. [hand,

Sir John. Plague o' your carriage! why, he kissed your
Looked babies in your eyes, and winked and pinked.[2]
You thought I had esteemed him! 'Sblood, you whore,
Do not I know that you do know you lie?
When didst thou hear me say and mean one thing?
O, I could kick you now, and tear your face,
And eat thy breasts like udders.

L. Per. Sir, you may,
But if I know what hath deserved all this,

[1] A dish of several kinds of meat, mixed. Here the term is used metaphorically to signify a jumble. [2] Peeped.

I am no woman : 'cause he kissed my hand
Unwillingly ?
Sir John. A little louder, pray.
L. Per. You are a base fellow, an unworthy man,
As e'er poor gentlewoman matched withal.
Why should you make such show of love to any
Without the truth ? thy beastly mind is like
Some decayed tradesman, that doth make his wife
Entertain those for gain he not endures.
Pish ! swell and burst : I had rather with thy sword
Be hewed to pieces, than lead such a life.
Out with it, valiant sir : I hold you for
A drawer upon women, not on men.
I will no more conceal your hollow heart,
But e'en report you as you are in truth. [you whore.
Sir John. This is called marriage. Stop your mouth,
L. Per. Thy mother was a whore, if I be one.
Sir John. You know there's company in the house

Enter SUBTLE.

Sweet friend, what, have you writ your letter ?
Sub. 'Tis done, dear friend : I have made you stay too
I fear you'll be benighted. [long ;
Sir John. Fie ! no, no.
Madam and sweetest wife, farewell ; God bless us.
Make much of Master Subtle here, my friend.[*Kisses her.*
Till my return, which may be even as't happens,
According as my business hath success. [*Exit.*
Sub. How will you pass the time now, fairest mistress ?
L. Per. In troth, I know not : wives without their husbands,
Methinks, are lowering days.
Sub. Indeed, some wives
Are like dead bodies in their husband's absence.
L. Per. If any wife be, I must needs be so,
That have a husband far above all men ;
Untainted with the humours others have,

A perfect man, and one that loves you truly:
You see the charge he left of your good usage.
Sub. Pish! he's an ass, I know him; a stark ass,
Of a most barbarous condition,
False-hearted to his friend, rough unto you;
A most dissembling and perfidious fellow.
I care not if he heard me: this I know,
And will make good upon him with my sword,
Or any for him—for he will not fight.
L. Per. Fie, servant! you show small civility
And less humanity: d'ye requite
My husband's love thus ill? for what d'ye think
Of me, that you will utter to my face
Such harsh, unfriendly, slanderous injuries
Even of my husband? Sir, forbear, I pray,
My ears or your own tongue: I am no housewife
To hear my husband's merit thus depraved.
Sub. His merit is a halter, by this light.
You think he's out of town now; no such matter:
But gone aside, and hath importuned me
To try your chastity.
L. Per. It cannot be.
Alas! he is as free from jealousy,
And ever was, as confidence itself.
I know he loves me too-too heartily
To be suspicious or to prove my truth.
Sub. If I do feign in ought, ne'er may I purchase
The grace I hope for! and, fair mistress,
If you have any spirit, or wit, or sense,
You will be even with such a wretched slave.
Heaven knows I love you as the air I draw!
Think but how finely you may cuckold him,
And safely, too, with me, who will report
To him, that you are most invincible,
Your chastity not to be subdued by man.
L. Per. When you know I'm a whore?
Sub. A whore? fie! no;

That you have been kind, or so : your whore doth live
In Pickt-hatch,[1] Turnbull Street.
L. Per. Your whore lives there ! [*Aside.*
Well, servant, leave me to myself awhile :
Return anon ; but bear this hope away,
'T shall be with you, if I at all do stray. [*Exit* SUBTLE.
Why, here's right worldly friendship ! ye're well-met.
O men ! what are you ? why is our poor sex
Still made the degraded subjects in these plays
For vices, folly, and inconstancy :
When, were men looked into with such critical eyes
Of observation, many would be found
So full of gross and base corruption,
That none (unless the devil himself turned writer)
Could feign so badly to express them truly ?
Some wives that had a husband now, like mine,
Would yield their honours up to any man :
Far be it from my thoughts ! O, let me stand,
Thou God of marriage and chastity,
An honour to my sex ! no injury
Compel the virtue of my breast to yield !
It's not revenge for any wife to stain
The nuptial bed, although she be yoked ill.
Who falls, because her husband so hath done,
Cures not his wound, but in herself makes one. [*Exit.*



SCENE III.—*A Room in* INGEN'S *House.*

Enter INGEN, *reading a letter ; he sits down in a chair and stamps with his foot ; a* Servant *enters.*

Ingen. Who brought this letter ?
Ser. A little Irish footboy, sir :
He stays without for an answer.
Ingen. Bid him come in. Lord !

[1] The "Vestals of Pict-hatch," (*The Alchemist*, II. i.,) are often referred to. See also *Merry Wives of Windsor*, II. ii., etc.

What deep dissemblers are these females all.
How far unlike a friend this lady used me,
And here how like one mad in love she writes.

Enter Lady HONOUR, *like an* Irish Footboy, *with a dart.*[1]

So bless me, Heaven, but thou art the prettiest boy
That e'er ran by a horse! Hast thou dwelt long
With thy fair mistress?

L. Hon. I came but this morning, sir.

Ingen. How fares thy lady, boy?

L. Hon. Like to a turtle that hath lost her mate,
Drooping she sits; her grief, sir, cannot speak.
Had it a voice articulate, we should know
How and for what cause she suffers; and perhaps—
But 'tis unlikely—give her comfort, sir.
Weeping she sits, and all the sound comes from her,
Is like the murmur of a silvery brook,
Which her tears truly would make there about her,
Sat she in any hollow continent.

Ingen. Believe me, boy, thou hast a passionate tongue,
Lively expression, or thy memory
Hath carried thy lesson well away.
But wherefore mourns thy lady?

L. Hon. Sir, you know,
And would to God I did not know myself.

Ingen. Alas! it cannot be for love to me.
When last I saw her, she reviled me, boy,
With bitterest words, and wished me never more
To approach her sight: and for my marriage now
I do sustain it as a penance due
To the desert that made her banish me.

[1] It seems to have been the custom to employ the Irish as lackeys or footmen at this period. R. Brathwaite, in his *Time's Curtaine Drawne*, 1621, speaking of the attendants of a courtier, mentions "two Irish lacquies" as among them. The "dart" which, according to this play, and Middleton and Rowley's *Faire Quarrel* (edit. 1622), they carried, was perhaps intended as an indication of the country from which they came, as being part of the accoutrements of the native Irish.—*Collier.*

L. Hon. Sir, I dare swear, she did presume no words,
Nor dangers had been powerful to restrain
Your coming to her, when she gave the charge—
But are you married truly?

Ingen. Why, my boy,
Dost think I mock myself? I sent her gloves.

L. Hon. The gloves she has returned you, sir, by me,
And prays you give them to some other lady,
That you'll deceive next, and be perjured to.
Sure, you have wronged her: sir, she bad me tell you,
She ne'er thought goodness dwelt in many men,
But what there was of goodness in the world,
She thought you had it all; but now she sees
The jewel she esteemed is counterfeit;
That you are but a common man yourself—
A traitor to her and her virtuous love!
That all men are betrayers, and their breasts
As full of dangerous gulfs as is the sea,
Where any woman, thinking to find harbour,
She and her honour are precipitated,
And never to be brought with safety off.
Alas, my hapless lady desolate!
Distressed, forsaken virgin!

Ingen. Sure, this boy
Is of an excellent nature who, so newly
Ta'en to her service, feels his mistress' grief,
As he and they were old familiar friends.
Why weep'st thou gentle lad?

L. Hon. Who hath one tear,
And would not save't from all occasions,
From brothers' slaughters and from mothers' deaths,
To spend it here for my distressèd lady?
But, sir, my lady did command me beg
To see your wife, that I may bear to her
The sad report. What creature could make you
Untie the hand fast pledged unto her?

Ingen. Wife, wife, come forth! now, gentle boy, be judge,

Enter FRANK *disguised as a* Woman *and masked.* INGEN *kisses him.*

If such a face as this, being paid with scorn
By her I did adore, had not full power
To make me marry.

L. Hon. By the God of love,
She's a fair creature, but faith, should be fairer.
My lady, gentle mistress, one that thought
She had some interest in this gentleman,
(Who now is only yours) commanded me
To kiss your white hand, and to sigh and weep,
And wish you that content she should have had
In the fruition of her love you hold.
She bad me say, God give you joy, to both ;
Yet this withal (if ye were married) :
No one her footsteps ever more should meet,
Nor see her face but in a winding-sheet.

Frank. Alas, poor lady ! faith, I pity her,
And, but to be i' th' same state, could forego
Anything I possess to ease her woe.

L. Hon. Love's blessing light upon thy gentle soul !
Men rail at women, mistress, but 'tis we
Are false and cruel, ten times more unkind ;
You are smoother far and of a softer mind.
Sir, I have one request more.

Ingen. Gentle lad,
It must be one of a strange quality
That I deny thee : both thy form and mind
Inform me that thy nurture hath been better,
Than to betray thee to this present life.

L. Hon. 'Tis, that you would vouchsafe to entertain me.
My feet do tremble under me to bear
My body back unto my uncouth lady,
To assure her grief. What heart so hard would owe
A tongue to tell so sad a tale to her ?
Alas ! I dare not look upon her eyes,
Where wrongèd love sits like the basilisk,

And, sure, would kill me for my dire report:
Or rather should not I appear like death,
[*Holding up the dart.*
When every word I spake shot through her heart
More mortally than his unsparing dart?

Frank. Let me speak for the boy.

Ingen. To what end, love?
No, I will sue to him to follow me.
In troth, I love thy sweet condition,
And may live to inform thy lady of thee.
Come in; dry, dry thine eyes, respite thy woe;
The effects of causes crown or overthrow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—Lady BRIGHT'S *Lodgings.*

Enter Lord PROUDLY, Lord FEESIMPLE, WELLTRIED, SELDOM, Lady BRIGHT, BOLD *still disguised as a* Waiting-woman, *pinning-in a ruff*, Lady PERFECT.

L. Proudly. 'Slight, what should be become of her? you swear
She passed not forth of doors, and i'th' house she is not?

L. Bright. Did you not see her, Princox?

L. Proud. This same bawd
Has brought her letters from some younger brother,
And she is stolen away.

Bold. Bawd! I defy you.
Indeed, your lordship thinks you may make bawds
Of whom you please. I'll take my oath upon a book,
Since I met her in the necessary house i' th' morning,
I ne'er set eye on her.

Grace. She went not out of doors.

L. Proud. Sure, she has an invisible ring.

L. Fee. Marry, she's the honester woman, for some of their rings are visible enough, the more shame for them,

still say I. Let the pond at Islington[1] be searched: go to, there's more have drowned themselves for love this year than you are aware of.

L. Proud. Pish! you are a fool.

Well. 'Sheart; call him fool again.

L. Fee. By this light and I will, as soon as ever you have showed me the Swaggerers.[2]

L. Per. Her clothes are all yonder, my lord.

Grace. And even those same she had on to-day.

L. Proud. Madam, where is your husband?

L. Per. Rid into the country.

L. Fee. O' my conscience, rid into France with your sister.

All. Away, away; for shame! [

L. Fee. Why, I hope she is not the first lady that has ran away with other women's husbands.

Well. It may be she's stolen out to see a play.

L. Proud. Who should go with her, man?

L. Bright. Upon my life, you'll hear of her at Master Ingen's house: some love passed betwixt them, and we heard that he was married to-day to another.

L. Proud. 'Sheart! I'll go see. [*Exit.*

Well. Come to the Swaggerers.

L. Fee. Mercy upon me! a man or a—Lord now?

[*Exeunt* Lord FEESIMPLE *and* WELLTRIED.

All. Here's a coil[3] with a lord and his sister.

L. Bright. Princox, hast not thou pinned in that ruff yet? ha! how thou fumblest!

Bold. Troth, madam, I was ne'er brought up to it; 'tis chambermaid's work, and I have ever lived gentlewoman, and been used accordingly. [*Exeunt.*

[1] See note *ante* p. 386.

[2] *i.e.* The "Kings of Turnbull" who appear in the next Act, scene iv.

[3] Bother.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.—SUBTLE'S *Apartment.*

Enter Sir JOHN LOVEALL *and* SUBTLE.



UB. She's a rare wife, believe it sir: were all such,
We never should have false inheritors.
Sir John. Pish! friend, there is no woman in the world
Can hold out in the end, if youth Met in one subject, do assault her aptly; [shape, wit,
For failing once, you must not faint, but try
Another way: the paths of women's minds
Are crooked and diverse; they have byways
To lead you to the palace of their pleasures,
And you must woo discreetly. First, observe
The disposition of her you attempt:
If she be spriteful and heroical,
Possess her that you are valiant, and have spirit:
Talk nothing but of beating every man,
That is your hindrance; though you do not do it,
Or dare not 'tis no matter. Be she free
And of a liberal soul, give bounteously
To all the servants; let your angels[1] fly
About the room, although you borrowed 'em.
If she be witty, so must your discourse:
Get wit, what shift soe'er you make for it,
Though't cost you all your land; and then a song

[1] The gold coins so named.

Or two is not amiss, although you buy 'em:
There's many in the town will furnish you.
Sub. But still, I tell you, you must use her roughly.
Beat her black and blue, take all her clothes,
And give them to some punk[1]: this will be ground
For me to work upon.
Sir John. All this I have done.
I have left her now as bare that, should I die,
Her fortune, o' my conscience, would be
To marry some tobacco-man: she has nothing
But an old black-work waistcoat, which would serve
Exceeding well to set i' th' shop, and light
Pipes for the lousy footmen. And, sweet friend,
First here's a jewel to present her; then,
Here is a sonnet writ against myself,
Which as thine own thou shalt accost her with.
Farewell, and happy success attend thee! [*Exit.*
Sub. Ha, ha, ha!
[*Reads*] "Fairest, still wilt thou be true
To man so false to thee?
Did he lend a husband's due,
Thou didst owe him loyalty;
But will curses, wants and blows
Breed no change in thy white soul?
Be not a fool to thy first vows,
Since his first breach doth thy faith control.
No beauty else could be so chaste;
Think not thou honour'st woman then,
Since by thy conscience all disgraced
Are robbed of the dear loves of men.
Then grant me my desire, that vow to prove
A real husband, his adulterate love."
Took ever man more pains to be a cuckold!
O monstrous age, where men themselves we see,
Study and pay for their own infamy. [*Exit.*

[1] Prostitute.

SCENE II. —*A Room in* INGEN'S *House.*

Enter INGEN, Lady HONOUR, Lord PROUDLY, FRANK, *attired like a* Woman: INGEN *and* Lord PROUDLY, *with their swords drawn.*

L. Proud. Give me my sister! I'll have her forth thy heart.

Ingen. No earthly lord can pull her out of that,
Till he have plucked my heart first out. My lord,
Were't not inhospitable, I could wrong you here
In my own house. I am so full of woe
For your lost sister, that by all my joys
Hoped for in her, my heart weeps tears of blood:
A whiter virgin and a worthier
Had ne'er creation; Leda's swan was black
To her virginity and immaculate thoughts.

L. Proud. Where hast thou hid her? give her me again;
For, by the God of vengeance, be she lost,
The female hate shall spring betwixt our names
Shall never die, while one of either house
Survives: our children shall, at seven years old,
Strike knives in one another.

Ingen. Let hell gape
And take me quick, if I know where she is;
But am so charged with sorrow for her loss,
Being the cause of it (as no doubt I am),
That I had rather fall upon my sword
[*Offering to kill himself.*
Than breathe a minute longer.

Frank O sir! hold.

L. Proud. Thou shalt not need: I have a sword to bathe
In thy false blood, inhuman murderer.

L. Hon. Good sir, be pacified: I'll go, I'll run
Many a mile to find your sister out.
She never was so desperate of grace

By violence to rob herself of life,
And so her soul endanger. Comfort, sir;
She's but retired somewhere, on my life.
Ingen. Prythee, let me alone— [*To* FRANK.
Do I stand to defend that wretched life,
That is in doubt of hers? here, worthy lord,
Behold a breast framed of thy sister's love;
Hew it, for thou shalt strike but on a stock,
Since she is gone that was the cause it lived.
L. Proud. Out false dissembler! art not married?
Ingen. No; behold it is my younger brother dressed.
[*Plucks off his head-tire.*
A man, or woman, that hath gulled the world,
Intended for a happier event
Than this that followed, that she now is gone.
O fond experiments of simple man!
Fool to thy fate, since all thy project, meant
But mirth, is now converted unto death.
L. Hon. O, do not burst me, joy! that modesty
[*Aside*
Would let me show myself to finish all!
L. Proud. Nay, then thou hast my sister somewhere, villain!
'Tis plain now thou wilt steal thy marriage.
She is no match for thee, assure thyself.
If all the law in England or my friends
Can cross it, 't shall not be.
Ingen. Would 'twere so well,
And that I knew the lady to be safe!
Give me no ill-words. Sir, this boy and I
Will wander like two pilgrims till we find her.
If you do love her as you talk, do so:
The love or grief that is expressed in words,
Is slight and easy; 'tis but shallow woe
That makes a noise; deep'st waters stillest go.[1]

[1] A different version of this proverb occurs in *Henry* VI. Part II., III., i. 53.

I love her better than thy parents did,
Which is beyond a brother.

L. Proud. Slave! thou liest.

Ingen. Zounds! [*He is about to strike.*

Frank. Kill him!

L. Hon. O, hold! Sir, you dishonour much your brother
To counsel him 'gainst hospitality
To strike in his own house.

Ingen. You, lord insolent, I will fight with you:
Take this as a challenge, and set your time.

L. Proud. Tomorrow morning, Ingen;
'Tis that I covet, and provoke thee for.

Frank. Will you not strike him now?

Ingen. No; my good boy
Is both discreet and just in his advice,
Thy glories are to last but for a day:
Give me thy hand;
To-morrow morning thou shalt be no lord.

L. Proud. To-morrow morning thou shalt not be at all.

Ingen. Pish! why should you think so? have not I arms,
A soul as bold as yours, a sword as true?
I do not think your honour in the field,
Without your lordship's liveries, will have odds.

L. Proud. Farewell, and let's have no excuses, pray. [*Exit.*

Ingen. I warrant you. Pray, say your prayers to-night,
And bring no inkhorn w'ye, to set your hand to
A satisfactory recantation. [*Exit.*

L. Hon. O wretched maid! whose sword can I pray for?
But by the other's loss I must find death.
O odious brother, if he kill my love!

O bloody love, if he should kill my brother!
Despair on both sides of my discontent
Tells me no safety rests but to prevent. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—Lady BRIGHT's *Lodgings.*

Enter Lady BRIGHT *and* BOLD *still disguised as a* Woman.

L. Bright. What's o'clock, Princox?

Bold. Bedtime, an't please you, madam.

L. Bright. Come, undress me. Would God had made me a man!

Bold. Why, madam?

L. Bright. Because
I would have been in bed as soon as they.
We are so long unpinning and unlacing.

Bold. Yet many of us, madam, are quickly undone sometime: but herein we have the advantage of men, though they can be abed sooner than we, it's a great while, when they are abed, ere they can get up.

L. Bright. Indeed, if they be well-laid, Princox, one cannot get them up in haste.

Bold. O God! madam, how mean you that? I hope you know, ill things taken into a gentlewoman's ears are the quick corrupters of maiden modesty. I would be loth to continue in any service unfit for my virgin estate, or where the world should take any notice of light behaviour in the lady I follow; for, madam, the main point of chastity in a lady is to build the rock of a good opinion amongst the people by circumstances, and a fair show she must make. *Si non caste, tamen caute,* madam; and though wit be a wanton, madam, yet I beseech your ladyship, for your own credit and mine, let the bridle of judgment be always in the chaps of it, to give

it head or restrain it, according as time and place shall be convenient.

L. Bright. Precise and learned Princox, dost not thou go to Blackfriars ?[1]

Bold. Most frequently, madam, unworthy vessel that I am to partake or retain any of the delicious dew that is there distilled.

L. Bright. But why should'st thou ask me what I meant e'en now ? I tell thee, there's nothing uttered but carries a double sense, one good, one bad ; but if the hearer apply it to the worst, the fault lies in his or her corrupt understanding not in the speaker ; for to answer to your Latin, *pravis omnia prava.* Believe me, wench, if ill come into my fancy, I will purge it by speech : the less will remain within. A pox of these nice-mouthed creatures ! I have seen a narrow pair of lips utter as broad a tale as can be bought for money. Indeed, an ill tale unuttered is like a maggot in a nut, it spoils the whitest kernel.

Bold. You speak most intelligently, madam.

L. Bright. Hast not done yet ? Thou art an old fumbler, I perceive. Methinks thou dost not do things like a woman.

Bold. Madam, I do my endeavour, and the best can do no more ; they that could do better, it may be would not, and then 'twere all one. But rather than be a burthen to your ladyship, I protest sincerely, I would beg my bread ; therefore I beseech you, madam, to hold me excused, and let my goodwill stand for the action.

L. Bright. Let thy goodwill stand for the action ? If goodwill would do it, there's many a lady in this land would be content with her own lord ; and thou can'st not be a burthen to me, without thou lie upon me, and

[1] Compare Act II., i., "follow the friars." In *The Alchemist*, I., i., Face is a captain "whom not a Puritan in Blackfriars will trust." That Blackfriars, in spite of the theatre being there, was a common residence of the Puritans many references prove.

that were preposterous in thy sex. Take no exceptions at what I say. Remember you said *stand* even now. There was a word for one of your coat, indeed!

Bold. I swear, madam, you are very merry. God send you good luck. Has your ladyship no waters that you use at bedtime?

L. Bright. No in troth, Princox.

Bold. No complexion?

L. Bright. None but mine own, I swear. Didst thou ever use any?

Bold. No, indeed, madam; now and then a piece of scarlet, or so; a little white and red ceruse; but, in troth, madam, I have an excellent receipt for a nightmask, as ever you heard.

L. Bright. What is it?

Bold. Boar's grease one ounce; Jordan almonds, blanched and ground, a quartern; red rosewater, half a pint; mare's urine, newly covered, half a score drops.

L. Bright. Fogh! no more of thy medicine, if thou lovest me. Few of our knight-errant, when they meet a lady-errant in a morning, would think her face had lain so plastered all night. Thou hast had some apothecary to thy sweetheart. But, leaving this face-physic (for, by my troth, it may make others have good ones, but it makes me a scurvy one), which of all the gallants in the town wouldst thou make a husband of, if thou mightest have him for thy choosing?

Bold. In troth, madam, but you'll say I speak blindly, but let my love stand aside——

L. Bright. I think it not fit, indeed, your love should stand in the middle.

Bold. I say, Master Bold. O, do but mark him, madam; his leg, his hand, his body, and all his members stand in print.[1]

L. Bright. Out upon thee, Princox! No. Methinks

[1] Occurs in much the same sense in *A Woman is a Weathercock*, I., ii.—"this doublet sets in print my lord."

Welltried's a handsome fellow. I like not these starched gallants: masculine faces and masculine gestures please me best.

Bold. How like you Master Pert?

L. Bright. Fie upon him! when he is in his scarlet clothes, he looks like a man of wax, and I had as lief have a dog o 'wax: I do not think but he lies in a case o' nights. He walks as if he were made of gins[1]—as if Nature had wrought him in a frame: I have seen him sit discontented a whole play, because one of the purls of his band was fallen out of his reach to order again.

Bold. Why, Bold, madam, is clean contrary.

L. Bright. Ay, but that's as ill: each extreme is alike vicious; his careful carelessness is his study. He spends as much time to make himself slovenly, as the other to be spruce. His garters hang over upon the calves of his legs, his doublet unbuttoned, and his points untrussed;[2] his hair in's eyes like a drunkard, and his hat, worn on the hinder-part of his head, as if he cared more for his memory than his wit, makes him look as if he were distracted. Princox, I would have you lie with me: I do not love to lie alone.

Bold. With all my heart, madam.

L. Bright. Are you clean-skinned?

Bold. Clean-skinned, madam? there's a question! do you think I have the itch? I am an Englishwoman: I protest, I scorn the motion.

L. Bright. Nay, prithee, Princox, be not angry: it's a sign of honesty, I can tell you.

Bold. Faith, madam, I think 'tis but simple honesty that dwells at the sign of the scab.

L. Bright. Well, well, come to bed, and we'll talk further of all these matters. [*Exit.*

Bold. Fortune, I thank thee; I will owe thee eyes
For this good turn! now is she mine indeed.

[1] A gin is a perpendicular wooden axle with projecting arms.
[2] *i.e.* With the tagged points of his hose or breeches unlaced.

Thou hast given me that success my project hoped.
Off, false disguise, that hast been true to me,
And now be Bold, that thou may'st welcome be. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Inside a Tavern.*

Enter WHOREBANG, BOTS, TEARCHAPS, *and* SPILLBLOOD *with several patches on their faces; and* Drawer.

Tear. Damn me, we will have more wine, sirrah, or we'll down into the cellar, and drown thee in a butt of Malmsey, and hew all the hogsheads in pieces.

Whore. Hang him, rogue! shall he die as honourable as the Duke of Clarence? by this flesh, let's have wine, or I will cut thy head off, and have it roasted and eaten in Pie Corner next Bartholomew-tide.[1]

Draw. Gentlemen, I beseech you consider where you are—Turnbull Street—a civil place: do not disturb a number of poor gentlewomen. Master Whorebang, Master Bots, Master Tearchaps, and Master Spillblood, the watch are abroad.

Spill. The watch! why, you rogue, are not we kings of Turnbull?

Draw. Yes, marry are ye, sir: for my part, if you'll be quiet, I'll have a sign made of ye, and it shall be called the four kings of Turnbull.

Bots. Will you fetch us wine?

Whore. And a whore, sirrah!

Draw. Why, what d'ye think of me? am I an infidel, a Turk, a pagan, a Saracen? I have been at Bess Turnup's, and she swears all the gentlewomen went to

[1] In allusion to the cooks' shops of this well-known locality and to the special provision they made at the time of Bartholomew Fair. It will be remembered that the Great Fire of London ended at Pie Corner, Smithfield.

see a play at the Fortune,[1] and are not come in yet, and she believes they sup with the players.

Tear. Damn me, we must kill all those rogues: we shall never keep a whore honest for them.

Bots. Go your ways, sirrah. We'll have but a gallon apiece, and an ounce of tobacco.

Draw. I beseech you, let it be but pottles.[2]

Spill. 'Sheart! you rogue. [*Exit* Drawer.

Enter WELLTRIED *and* Lord FEESIMPLE.

Whore. Master Welltried! welcome as my soul.

Enter Drawer *with wine, plate and tobacco.*

Bots. Noble lad, how dost thou?

Spill. As welcome as the tobacco and the wine, boy.

Tear. Damn me, thou art.

L. Fee. Bless me (save you gentlemen), they have not one face among 'em! I could wish myself well from them: I would I had put out something upon my return; I had as lief be at Barmuthoes.[3]

Well. Pray, welcome this gentleman.

Spill. Is he valiant? [*Aside.*

Well. Faith, he's a little faulty that way; somewhat of a bashful and backward nature, yet I have brought him amongst you, because he hath a great desire to be fleshed. [*Aside.*

L. Fee. Yes, faith, sir, I have a great desire to be fleshed; now Master Welltried said he would bring me to the only flesh-mongers in the town.

Well. Sir, he cannot endure the sight of steel. [*Aside.*

Whore. Not steel? zounds! [*Claps his sword over the table.*

[1] *i.e.* The theatre of that name in Golding Lane, Cripplegate. See the volume of Dekker's plays in "The Mermaid Series," for a view and a full account of it.

[2] *i.e.* Half gallons.

[3] He means that he wishes he had "insured" his return as he would as willingly be at the Bermudas.—*Collier.* The Bermudas (or Streights) was a slang name for parts of the town frequented by bullies and swaggerers such as appear in this scene.

L. Fee. Now I am going! [*Faints.*

Bots. Here's to you, sir. I'll fetch you again with a cup of sack.

L. Fee. I pledge you, sir, and begin to you in a cup of claret.

Well. Hark you, my lord: what will you say if I make you beat all these out of the room? [*Aside.*

L. Fee. What will I say? why, I say it is impossible; 'tis not in mortal man. [*Aside.*

Well. Well, drink apace: if any brave you, outbrave him; I'll second you. They are a company of cowards, believe me. [*Aside.*

L. Fee. By this light, I would they were else: if I thought so, I would be upon the jack[1] of one of 'em instantly, that same little "Damn me." But, Master Welltried, if they be not very valiant, or dare not fight, how came they by such cuts and gashes, and such broken faces. [*Aside.*

Well. Why, their whores strike 'em with cans and glasses, and quart-pots: if they have nothing by 'em, they strike 'em with the pox, and you know that will lay one's nose as flat as the basket-hilt dagger. [*Aside.*

L. Fee. Well, let me alone. [*Aside.*

Tear. This bully dares not drink.

L. Fee. Dare I not, sir?

Well. Well said; speak to him, man.

L. Fee. You had best try me, sir.

Spill. We four will drink four healths to four of the seven deadly sins, pride, drunkenness, wrath and lechery.

L. Fee. I'll pledge 'em, and I thank you; I know 'em all. Here's one.

Whore. Which of the sins.

L. Fee. By my troth even to pride.

Well. Why, well said; and in this do not you only pledge your mistress's health, but all the women's in the world.

[1] The jack, properly, is a coat of mail, but it here means a buff jacket or jerkin worn by soldiers or pretended soldiers.—*Collier.*

L. Fee. So: now this little cup to wrath, because he and I are strangers.

Tear. Brave boy! damn me, he shall be a roarer.

L. Fee. Damn me, I will be a roarer, or't shall cost me a fall.

Bots. The next place that falls, pray, let him have it.

L. Fee. Well, I have two of my healths to drink yet—lechery and drunkenness, which even shall go together.

Well. Why, how now, my lord, a moralist?

Bots. Damn me, art thou a lord? what virtues hast thou?

L. Fee. Virtues? enough to keep e'er a damn-me company in England: methinks you should think it virtue enough to be a lord.

Whore. Will you not pledge these healths, Master Welltried? we'll have no observers.[1]

Well. Why, Monsieur Whorebang? I am no playmaker, and, for pledging your healths, I love none of the four you drank to so well.

Spill. Zounds! you shall pledge me this.

Well. Shall I?

L. Fee. What's the matter? dost hear, Master Welltried, use thine own discretion; if thou wilt not pledge him, say so, and let me see if e'er a damn-me of 'em all will force thee.

Spill. Puff! will your lordship take any tobacco? you lord with the white face.

Bots. Heart! he cannot put it through his nose.

L. Fee. Faith, you have ne'er a nose to put it through; d'ye hear? blow your face, sirrah.

Tear. You'll pledge me, sir?

Well. Indeed, I will not.

L. Fee. Damn me, he shall not then.[2]

[1] *i.e.* Whorebang is afraid that Welltried and his friend are writers who have come to the tavern merely for the purpose of making notes for a play; his remark is explained by Welltried's answer.

[2] In both the old copies this remark is erroneously given to Tearchaps.—*Collier.*

Tear. Lord, use your own words, "damn me" is mine; I am known by it all the town o'er, d'ye hear?

L. Fee. It is as free for me as you, d'ye hear, Patch?[1]

Tear. I have paid more for't.

Well. Nay, I'll bear him witness in a truth: his soul lies for't,[2] my lord.

Spill. Welltried, you are grown proud since you got good clothes and have followed your lord.

[*Strikes him, and they scuffle.*

Whore. I have known you lousy, Welltried.

Well. Roarer, you lie.

[*They draw and fight; throw pots and stools.*

Draw. O Jesu!

Whore., Bots, Tear., and Spill. Zounds! cleave or be cleft: pell-mell: slash arms and legs.

L. Fee. Heart! let me alone with 'em.

[*They break off, and exeunt* WHOREBANG, BOTS, TEARCHAPS *and* SPILLBLOOD.

Well. Why, now thou art a worthy wight, indeed, a Lord of Lorn.[3]

L. Fee. I am a madman: look, is not that one of their heads?

Well. Fie! no, my lord.

L. Fee. Damn me, but 'tis; I would not wish you to cross me a'purpose: if you have anything to say to me, so—I am ready.

Well. O brave lord! many a roarer thus is made by wine. Come, it is one of their heads, my lord.

L. Fee. Why so, then, I will have my humour. If you love me, let's go break windows somewhere.

Well. Drawer, take your plate. For the reckoning there's some of their cloaks: I will be no shot-log to such.

Draw. God's blessing o' your heart for thus ridding the house of them.

[*Exeunt.*

[1] The common name for the domestic fool.

[2] *i.e.* Lies in pawn. [3] The hero of an early heroic ballad.—*Hazlitt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE 1.—Lady BRIGHT'S *Lodgings.*

Enter Lady BRIGHT *undressed, a sword in her hand; and* BOLD *in his shirt, as started from bed.*



ADY BRIGHT. Uncivil man! if I should take thy life,
It were not to be weighed with thy attempt.
Thou hast for ever lost me.
Bold. Madam, why?
Can love beget loss? Do I covet you
Unlawfully? Am I an unfit man
To make a husband of? Send for a priest;
First consummate the match, and then to bed
Without more trouble.
L. Bright. No, I will not do't.
Bold. Why, you confessed to me (as your gentlewoman)
I was the man your heart did most affect;
That you did doat upon my mind and body.
L. Bright. So, by the sacred and inviolate knot
Of marriage, I do; but will not wed thee.
Bold. Why, yet enjoy me now. Consider, lady,
That little but blessed time I was in bed,
Although I lay as by my sister's side,
The world is apt to censure otherwise:
So, 'tis necessity that we marry now.
L. Bright. Pish! I regard not at a straw the world.
Fame from the tongues of men doth injury

Oftener than justice ; and as conscience
Only makes guilty persons, not report,
(For show we clear as springs unto the world,
If our own knowledge do not make us so,
That is no satisfaction to ourselves),
So stand we ne'er so leprous to men's eye,
It cannot hurt heart-known integrity.
You have trusted to that fond opinion,
This is the way to have a widowhood,
By getting to her bed. Alas ! young man,
Shouldst thou thyself tell thy companions
Thou hast dishonoured me (as you men have tongues
Forkèd and venomed 'gainst our subject sex) ;
It should not move me, that know 'tis not so :
Therefore depart. Truth be my virtuous shield.

Bold. Few widows would do thus.

L. Bright All modest would.

Bold. To be in bed, and in possession
Even of the mark I aimed at, and go off
Foiled and disgraced ! Come, come, you'll laugh at me
Behind my back ; publish I wanted spirit,
And mock me to the ladies ; call me child,
Say you denied me but to try the heat
And zeal of my affection toward you,
Then clapped up with a rhyme ; as for example—

He coldly loves retires for one vain trial,
For we are yielding when we make denial.

L. Bright. Servant, I make no question, from this time
You'll hold a more reverent opinion
Of some that wear long coats ; and 'tis my pride
To assure you that there are amongst us good,
And with this continency. If you go away,
I'll be so far from thinking it defect,
That I will hold you worthiest of men.

Bold. 'Sheart ! I am Tantalus : my longed-for fruit
Bobs at my lips, yet still it shrinks from me.
Have not I that, which men say never fails

To o'ercome any, opportunity?
Come, come; I am too cold in my assault.
By all the virtues that yet ever were
In man or woman, I with reverence
Do love thee, lady, but will be no fool
To let occasion slip her foretop from me.

L. Bright. You will fail this way too. Upon my knees
I do desire thee to preserve thy virtues,
And with my tears my honour: 'tis as bad
To lose our worths to them, or to deceive
Who have held worthy opinions of us,
As to betray trust. All this I implore
For thine own sake, not mine: as for myself,
If thou be'st violent, by this stupid night
And all the mischiefs her dark womb hath bred,
I'll raise the house; I'll cry a rape.

Bold. I hope
You will not hang me: that were murder, lady,
A greater sin than lying with me, sure.

L. Bright. Come, flatter not yourself with argument.
I will exclaim: the law hangs you, not I;
Or if I did, I had rather far confound
The dearest body in the world to me,
Than that that body should confound my soul.

Bold. Your soul? alas! mistress, are you so fond
To think her general destruction
Can be procured by such a natural act,
Which beasts are born to, and have privilege in?
Fie, fie! if this could be, far happier
Are insensitive[1] souls in their creation
Than man, the prince of creatures. Think you, Heaven
Regards such mortal deeds, or punisheth
Those acts for which he hath ordained us?

L. Bright. You argue like an atheist; man is never
The prince of creatures, as you call him now,
But in his reason; fail that, he is worse

[1] Hazlitt's alteration of the old reading "sensitive."

Than horse or dog, or beast of wilderness;
And 'tis that reason teacheth us to do
Our actions unlike them: then, that which you
Termed in them a privilege beyond us,
The baseness of their being doth express,
Compared to ours: horses, bulls and swine
Do leap their dams; because man does not so,
Shall we conclude his making[1] happiless?

Bold. You put me down—yet will not put me down.
I am too gentle: some of you, I have heard,
Love not these words, but force; to have it done,
As they sing prick-song, even at the first sight.

L. Bright. Go to: keep off; by heaven and earth, I'll call else!

Bold. How, if nobody hear you?

L. Bright. If they do not,
I'll kill you with mine own hand; never stare:
Or failing that, fall on this sword myself.

Bold. O widow wonderful! if thou be'st not honest,
Now God forgive my mother and my sisters.
Think but how finely, madam, undiscovered
For ever I might live: all day your gentlewoman
To do you service, but all night your man
To do you service: newness of the trick,
If nothing else, might stir ye.

L. Bright. 'Tis a stale one,
And was done in the Fleet ten years ago.
Will you begone? the door is open for you.

Bold. Let me but tarry till the morning, madam,
To send for clothes. Shall I go naked home?

L. Bright. 'Tis best time now; it is but one o'clock,
And you may go unseen: I swear, by Heaven,
I would spend all the night to sit and talk w'ye,
If I durst trust you: I do love you so.
My blood forsakes my heart now you depart.

Bold. 'Sheart! will you marry me hereafter, then?

[1] *i.e.* Mating.

L. Bright. No, you are too young, and I am much too old;
Ay, and unworthy, and the world will say
We married not for love. Good morrow, servant. [*Exit.*

Bold. Why so: these women are the errantest jugglers in the world: the wry-legged fellow is an ass to 'em. Well, I must have this widow, whate'er come on't. Faith, she has turned me out of her service very barely. Hark, what's here? music?

Enter SUBTLE *with a paper, and his* Boy *with a cloak.*

Sub. [*Reads.*] "Rise, lady mistress, rise,
The night hath tedious been;
No sleep hath fallen into my eyes,
Nor slumbers made me sin.
Is not she a saint, then say,
Thought of whom keeps sin away?

"Rise, madam rise and give me light,
Whom darkness still will cover,
And ignorance, darker than night,
Till thou smile on thy lover.
All want day, till thy beauty rise,
For the grey morn breaks from thine eyes!" [1]

Now sing it, sirrah. [*The song is sung by the* Boy.

Sub. 'Sfoot, who's this? young Master Bold! God save you; you are an early stirrer.

Bold. You say true, Master Subtle, I have been early up, But, as God help me, I was never the near.[2]

Sub. Where have you been, sir?

Bold. What's that to you, sir? at a woman's labour.

Sub. Very good: I ne'er took you for a man-midwife before.

Bold. The truth is, I have been up all night at dice

[1] Compare the song in *The Fatal Dowry*, Act II.
[2] An allusion to the proverb.—*Nashe.*

and lost my clothes. Good morrow, Master Subtle. Pray God the watch be broke up: I thank you for my music. [*Exit.*

Sub. 'Tis palpable, by this air; her husband being abroad, Bold has lain with her, and is now conveyed out of doors. Is this the Lady Perfect, with a pox? The truth is, her virtuous chastity began to make me make a miracle of her still holding out to me, notwithstanding her husband's most barbarous usage of her; but now, indeed, 'tis no marvel, since another possesses her.
Well, madam, I will go find out your cuckold;
I'll be revenged on you, and tell a tale
Shall tickle him. This is a cheat in love
Not to be borne: another to beguile
Me of the game I played for all this while. [*Exit.*



SCENE II.—BOLD'S *Lodgings.*

Enter WELL'TRIED, *and* BOLD *putting on his doublet;* Lord FEESIMPLE *asleep on a bed.*

Well. You see, we made bold with your lodging: indeed, I did assure myself you were fast for this night.

Bold. But how the devil came this fool in your company?

Well. 'Sfoot, man, I carried him last night among the roarers to flesh him: and, by this light, he got drunk, and beat 'em all.

Bold. Why, then, he can endure the sight of a drawn sword now?

Well. O God, sir, I think in my conscience he will eat steel shortly. I know not how his conversion will hold after this sleep; but, in an hour or two last night, he was grown such a little damnme, that I protest I was afraid of the spirit that I myself had raised in him. But this other

matter—of your expulsion thus, mads me to the heart. Were you in bed with her?

Bold. In bed, by Heaven.

Well. I'll be hanged, if you were not busy too soon: you should have let her slept first.

Bold. Zounds! man, she put her hand to my breasts, and swore I was no maid: now I, being eager to prove her words true, took that hint, and would violently have thrust her hand lower, when her thought, being swifter than my strength, made her no sooner imagine that she was betrayed, but she leaps out of the bed, whips me down a sword that hung by, and, as if fortitude and justice had met to assist her, spite of all argument, fair or foul, she forced me away.

Well. But is it possible thou shouldst have no more wit? wouldst thou come away upon any terms but sure ones, having night, her chamber, and herself naked in thine arms? By that light, if I had a son of fourteen, whom I had helped thus far, that had served me so, I would breech him.

Bold. 'Sheart! what would you have me done?

Well. Have done? done? twice at least.

Bold. Have played Tarquin, and ravished her?

Well. Pish! Tarquin was a blockhead: if he had had any wit and could have spoke, Lucrece had never been ravished; she would have yielded, I warrant thee, and so will any woman.

Bold. I was such an erroneous heretic to love and women as thou art, till now.

Well. God's precious! it makes me mad when I think on't. Was there ever such an absurd trick! now will she abuse thee horribly, say thou art a faint-hearted fellow, a milksop, and I know not what, as indeed thou art.

Bold. Zounds! would you had been in my place.

Well. Zounds! I would I had, I would have so jumbled her honesty. Wouldst thou be held out at stave's

end with words? dost thou not know a widow's a weak vessel, and is easily cast, if you close.

Bold. Welltried, you deal unfriendly.

Well. By this light, I shall blush to be seen in thy company.

Bold. Pray, leave my chamber.

Well. Pox upon your chamber!
I care not for your chamber nor yourself,
More than you care for me.

Bold. 'Sblood! I as little for you.

Well. Why, fare you well.

Bold. Why, fare well. Yet, Welltried,[1] I prythee, stay:
Thou know'st I love thee.

Well. 'Sheart! I love you as well;
But for my spleen or choler, I think I have
As much as you.

Bold. Well, friend,
This is the business you must do for me.
Repair unto the widow, where give out,
To-morrow morn I shall be married:
Invite her to the wedding. I have a trick
To put upon this lord, too, whom I made
My instrument to prefer me.

Well. What shall follow
I will not ask, because I mean to see't.
The jars 'twixt friends still keeps their friendship sweet.
[*Exit.*

L. Fee. [*Waking.*] Why, Welltried, you rogue! what's that? a vision?

Bold. Why, how now, my lord? whom do you call rogue? The gentleman you name is my friend. If you were wise, I should be angry.

L. Fee. Angry with me? why, damn me, sir, an you be, out with your sword. It is not with me, I tell you, as

[1] Hazlitt's correction; it is less abrupt than the old reading, "Why farewell you. Welltried, I prythee stay."

it was yesterday; I am fleshed, man, I. Have you anything to say to me?

Bold. Nothing but this: how many do you think you have slain last night?

L. Fee. Why, five; I never kill less.

Bold. There were but four. My lord, you had best provide yourself and begone; three you have slain stark dead.

L. Fee. You jest!

Bold. It is most true. Welltried is fled.

L. Fee. Why, let the roarers meddle with me another time: as for flying, I scorn it; I killed 'em like a man. When did you ever see a lord hang for anything? We may kill whom we list. Marry, my conscience pricks me. Ah? plague a' this drink! what things it makes us do! I do no more remember this now than a puppy-dog.

O bloody lord, that art bedaubed with gore!
Vain world, adieu, for I will roar no more.

Bold. Nay, stay, my lord: I did but try the tenderness of your conscience. All this is nothing so; but, to sweeten the tale I have for you, I foretold you this feigned mischance.

L. Fee. It is a tale belonging to the widow.

Bold. I think you are a witch.

L. Fee. My grandmother was suspected.

Bold. The widow has desired you by me to meet her to-morrow at church in some unknown disguise, lest any suspect it; for, quoth she,

Long hath he held me fast in his moist hand,
Therefore I will be his in nuptial band.

L. Fee. Bold, I have ever taken you to be my friend. I am very wise now and valiant; if this be not true, damn me, sir, you are the son of a whore, and you lie, and I will make it good with my sword.

Bold. I am whate'er you please, sir, if it be not true. I will go with you to the church myself. Your disguise I have thought on. The widow is your own. Come, leave your fooling.

L. Fee. [*Sings.*]

If this be true, thou little boy Bold,
So true, as thou tell'st to me,
To-morrow morn, when I have the widow
My dear friend shalt thou be. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III.—*A Street.*

Enter Lady HONOUR *as a* Footboy; SELDOM *with* PITTS *and* DONNER, *two* Serjeants.

L. Hon. Sir, 'tis most true, and in this shall you be
Unlike to other citizens, that arrest
To undo gentlemen: your clemency here,
Perchance, saves two lives: one from the other's sword,
The other from the law's. This morn they fight,
And though your debtor be a lord, yet should he
Miscarry, certainly your debt were lost.

Sel. Dost thou serve the Lord Proudly?

L. Hon. Sir, I do.

Sel. Well, such a boy as thou is worth more money
Than thy lord owes me. 'Tis not for the debt
I do arrest him, but to end this strife,
Which both may lose my money and his life.

Enter Lord PROUDLY, *with a riding-rod.*

L. Proud. My horse there! Zounds! I would not for the world
He should alight before me in the field;
My name and honour were for ever lost.

Sel. Good morrow to your honour. I do hear
Your lordship this fair morning is to fight,
And for your honour: did you never see
The play where the fat knight, hight Oldcastle,
Did tell you truly what his honour was?[1]

[1] This passage has been adduced by Dr. Farmer to show that Falstaff was originally called by Shakespeare Oldcastle, according

L. Proud. Why, how now, good man flatcap, what-d'ye-lack?[1]
Whom do you talk to, sirrah?

1st Ser. We arrest you.

L. Proud. Arrest me, rogue? I am a lord, ye curs,
A parliament man.

2nd Ser. Sir, we arrest you, though.

L. Proud. At whose suit?

Sel. At mine, sir.

L. Proud. Why, thou base rogue! did not I set thee up,
Having no stock but thy shop and fair wife?

Sel. Into my house with him!

L. Hon. Away with him! away with him!

L. Proud. A plot, a trick, by Heaven! See, Ingen's footboy:
'Tis by his master's means. O coward slave!
I'll put in bail, or pay the debt.

Sel. Ay, ay, ay; we'll talk with you within—thrust him in. [*Exeunt*

Enter INGEN, *looking on his sword, and bending it; and* FRANK.

Ingen. If I miscarry, Frank, I prythee see
All my debts paid: about five hundred pounds
Will fully satisfy all men: and my land,
And what I else possess, by Nature's right
And thy descent, Frank, I make freely thine.

Frank. I know you do not think I wish you dead
For all the benefit: besides, your spirit's

to the tradition mentioned by Rowe, and supported by Fuller in his "Worthies," and by other authorities. The point is argued at great length in Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, xvi. 410, *et seq.*, and the decisions of the learned have been various; but the balance of evidence is undoubtedly in favour of the opinion that Shakespeare made the change, perhaps to avoid the confusion of his very original character with the mere fat buffoon of the old play of *Henry V.*, a point not adverted to in the discussion. Field's testimony seems tolerably decisive.—*Collier.*

[1] "Flatcap" and "What-d'ye-lack" were cant names for citizens and apprentices.

So opposite to counsel to avert
Your resolution, that I save my breath,
Which would be lost in vain, to expire and spend
Upon your foe, if you fall under him.

Ingen. Frank, I protest, you shall do injury
Upon my foe, and much disturbance too
Unto my soul departing, die I here
Fairly, and on my single enemy's sword,
If you should not let him go off untouched.
Now, by the master of thy life and mine,
I love thee, boy, beyond any example,
As well as thou dost me; but should I go
Thy second to the field, as thou dost mine,
And if thine enemy killed thee like a man,
I would desire never to see him more,
But he should bear himself off with those wounds
He had received from thee, from that time safe
And without persecution by the law;
For what hap is our foe's might be our own,
And no man's judgment sits in justice' place,
But weighing other men's as his own case.

Frank He has the advantage of you, being a lord;
For should you kill him, you are sure to die,
And by some lawyer with a golden tongue,
That cries for right (ten angels on his side),
Your daring meet him called presumption:
But kill he you, he and his noble friends
Have such a golden snaffle for the jaws
Of man-devouring Pythagorean law,
They'll rein her stubborn chaps even to her tail:
And (though she have iron teeth to meaner men),
So master her, that, who displeased her most,
She shall lie under like a tired jade;
For small boats on rough seas are quickly lost,
But ships ride safe, and cut the waves that tost.

Ingen. Follow what may, I am resolved, dear brother.
This monster valour, that doth feed on men,

Groans in me for my reputation.
This charge I give thee, too—if I do die,
Never to part from the young boy which late
I entertained, but love him for my sake.
And for my mistress, the Lady Honour,
Whom to deceive I have deceived myself,
If she be dead, pray God I may give up
My life a sacrifice on her brother's sword;
But if thou liv'st to see her, gentle brother:
If I be slain, tell her I died, because
I had transgressed against her worthy love—
This sword is not well-mounted; let's see thine.

Enter Lady HONOUR *as a* Footboy.

L. Hon. Your staying, sir, is in vain, for my Lord
Just at his taking horse to meet you here, [Proudly,
At Seldom's suit (the citizen) was arrested
Upon an action of two hundred pounds.
I saw it, sir; 'tis true.

Ingen. O scurvy lord!
It had been a cleanlier shift than this to have had
It hindered by command, he being a lord.
But I will find him.

Re-enter Lord PROUDLY.

L. Proud. You see, valiant sir, I have got loose
For all your stratagem. O rogue! are you there?
[Lord PROUDLY *stabs* Lady HONOUR.

Ingen. Most ignoble lord!
[INGEN *stabs* Lord PROUDLY *in the left arm.*

L. Proud. Coward! thou didst this,
That I might be disabled for the fight,
Or that thou mightst have some excuse to shun me,
But 'tis my left arm thou hast lighted on.
I have no second: here are three of you.
If all do murder me, your consciences
Will more than hang you, damn you. Come, prepare!

Ingen. Brother, walk off, and take the boy away.
Is he hurt much?

Frank. Nothing, or very little.

[Lord PROUDLY *thrusts out* Lady HONOUR, *who is accompanied by* FRANK.

Ingen. I'll bind your wound up first: your loss of
May sooner make you faint. [blood

L. Proud. Ingen, thou art
A worthy gentleman: for this courtesy,
Go to, I'll save thy life. Come on, sir! [*A pass or two.*
I'll cut your codpiece point, sir, with this thrust,
And then down go your breeches.

Ingen. Your lordship's merry. [*Another pass.*
I had like to have spoiled your cutwork band.

Re-enter Lady HONOUR, *running;* FRANK *after her;* Lady HONOUR *kneels betwixt* PROUDLY *and* INGEN.

L. Hon. O master, hold your hand! my lord, hold yours,
Or let your swords meet in this wretched breast!
Yet you are both well; what blood you have lost,
Give it as for the injury you did,
And now be friends.

L. Proud. 'Sheart! 'tis a loving rogue.

Ingen. Kind boy, stand up: 'tis for thy wound he
My wrong is yet unsatisfied. [bleeds;

L. Proud. Hence! away!
It is a sister's loss that whets my sword.

L. Hon. O, stay, my lord! behold your sister here.
[*Discovers herself.*
Bleeding by your hand: servant, see your mistress
Turned to thy servant, running by thy horse;
Whose meaning 'twas to have prevented this,
But all in vain.

Frank. O noble lady!

Ingen. Most worthy pattern of all womenkind!

L. Proud. Ingen, I am satisfied; put up your sword.

Sister, you must with me: I have a husband,
The Lord Feesimple's father, old, but rich.
This gentleman is no match for you: kneel not.
That portion of yours I have consumed!
Thus marrying, you shall never come to want.

L. Hon. O sweet my lord, my brother! do not force
To break my faith, or to a loathèd bed. [me

Ingen. Force you he shall not: brother bear her
She is my wife, and thou shalt find my cause [hence,
Ten times improved now.

L. Proud. O, have at you, sir. [*A pass.*

L. Hon. Hold, hold, for Heaven's sake! was e'er wretched lady
Put to this hazard? Sir, let me speak
But one word with him, and I'll go with you,
And undergo whatever you command.

L. Proud. Do't quickly, for I love no whispering,
'Tis strange to see you, madam, with a sword!
You should have come hither in your lady's clothes.

L. Hon. Well, as you please, my lord: you are
Whatsoever before [witness,
Hath passed betwixt us, thus I do undo.
Were not I mad to think thou couldst love me,
That wouldst have slain my brother.

L. Proud. Say'st true, sister?

Ingen. O, thou fair creature! wilt thou be as false
As other ladies?

L. Hon. Thou art my example.
I'll kiss thee once: farewell for ever. Come, my lord,
Match me, with whom you please—a tumbler. [now
I must do this, else had they fought again.

L. Proud. Mine own best sister! Farewell Master Ingen. [*Exit with* Lady HONOUR.

Frank. O ancient truth! to be denied of no man:
An eel by the tail's held surer than a woman. [*Exeunt.*



ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* Sir JOHN LOVEALL'S *House.*

Enter SUBTLE, *with* Sir JOHN LOVEALL.

SUB. She is not to be cast.

Sir John. It cannot be:
Had you a wife, and I were in your case,
I would be hanged even at the chamber door,
Where I attempted, but I'd lay her flat.

Sub. Why, tell me truly, would it please you best,
To have her remain chaste or conquered?

Sir John. O friend, it would do me good at the heart
To have her overcome: she does so brag,
And stand upon her chastity, forsooth.

Sub. Why, then, in plain terms, sir, the fort is mine:
Your wife has yielded; "up tails" is her song.
The deed is done. Come now, be merry, man.

Sir John. Is the deed done indeed? Come, come, you jest.
Has my wife yielded? is "up tails" her song?
Faith, come to prose: how got you to the matter first, ha?
Pish! you are so bashful now—

Sub. Why, by my troth, I'll tell you, because you are my friend; otherwise you must note, it is a great hurt to the art of whoremastery to discover; besides, the skill was never mine o' th' price.

Sir John. Very good; on, sir.

Sub. At the first she was horrible stiff against me; then, sir, I took her by the hand, which I kissed.

Sir John. Good, sir.

Sub. And I called her pretty rogue, and I thrust my finger betwixt her breasts, and I made lips. At last I pulled her by the chin to me, and I kissed her.

Sir John. Hum !—very good.

Sub. So at the first she kissed very strangely, close and untoward. Then said I to her, think but upon the wrongs, the intolerable wrongs, the rogue your husband does you.

Sir John. Ay, that was very good: what said she to you then, sir?

Sub. Nay, I went on. First, quoth I, think how he hath used you—left you no means, given all your clothes to his punks[1]; struck you, turned your grey eyes into black ones, but yet—

Sir John. A pretty conceit!

Sub. Quoth I, these things are nothing in the rascal; think but what a base whoremaster the rascal is.

Sir John. Did you call me rascal so often, are you sure?

Sub. Yes, and oftener; for, said I, none comes amiss to the rogue. I have known him, quoth I, do three lousy beggars under hedges in the riding of ten mile, and I swore this too.

Sir John. 'Twas very well; but you did lie. On pray.

Sub. Pish! one must lie a little. Now, sir, by this time she began to kiss somewhat more openly and familiarly, her resistance began to slacken, and my assault began to stiffen. The more her bulwark decayed, the more my battery fortified. At last, sir, a little fumbling being passed to make the conquest more difficult, she perceiving my artillery mounted, falls me flat upon her back, cries me out aloud—

"Alas! I yield. Use me not roughly, friend;
My fort that, like Troy town, ten years hath stood
Besieged and shot at, did remain unwon;
But now 'tis conquered." So the deed was done.

[1] Loose women.

Sir John. Then came the hottest service. Forward with your tale, sir.

Sub. Nay,

Cætera quis nescit? lassi requievimus ambo:
Proveniant medii sic mihi sæpe dies.[1]

Sir John. Which is as much as to say I am a cuckold in all languages! But sure, 'tis not so? it is impossible my wife should yield.

Sub. Heyday! even now it was impossible she should hold out, and now it is impossible she should yield. Stay you but here, and be an ear-witness to what follows. I'll fetch your wife. [*Aside*] I know he will not stay. [*Exit.*

Sir John. Good faith, sir, but he will.
I do suspect some knavery in this.
Here will I hide myself; when thought as gone,
If they do ought unfitting, I will call
Witness, and straightway sue for a divorce. [*Exit.*

Re-enter SUBTLE *with* Lady PERFECT.

Sub. I knew he would not stay. Now, noble mistress, I claim your promise.

L. Per. What was that, good servant?

Sub. That you would lie with me.

L. Per. If with any man—
But, prithee, first consider with thyself,
If I should yield to thee, what a load thy conscience
Would bear about it; for I wish quick thunder
May strike me, if I yet have lost the truth,
Or whiteness of the hand I gave in church:
And 'twill not be thy happiness (as thou think'st)
That thou alone shouldst make a woman fall,
That did resist all else; but to thy soul
A bitter corrosive, that thou didst stain
Virtue that else had stood immaculate.
Nor speak I this as yielding unto thee,

[1] Ovid, "Amor." lib. i. el. 5, 25–6.

For 'tis not in thy power, wert thou the sweet'st
Of nature's children and the happiest,
To conquer me, nor in mine own to yield;
And thus it is with every pious wife.
Thy daily railing at my absent husband
Makes me endure thee worse; for let him do
The most preposterous, ill-relishing things:
To me they seem good, since my husband does 'em.
Nor am I to revenge or govern him:
And thus it should be with all virtuous wives.

Sub. Pox o' this virtue and this chastity!
Do you not know, fair mistress, a young gentleman
About this town called Bold? Where did he lie
Last night, sweet mistress? O, O! are you catched?
I saw him slip out of the house this morn,
As naked as this truth; and for this cause
I have told your husband that you yielded to me,
And he I warrant you will blaze it thoroughly.
As good do now, then, as be thought to do.

L. Per. No, 'twill not be yet. Thou injurious man!
How wilt thou right me in my husband's thoughts,
That on a false surmise and spite hast told
A tale to breed incurable discontent?
Bold was that old wench that did serve the widow,
And thinking by this way to gain her love,
Missed of his purpose, and was thus cashiered;
Nor cares she to proclaim it to the world.

Sub. Zounds! I have wronged you, mistress, on my knees [*Kneels.*
I ask your pardon, and will nevermore
Attempt your purity, but neglect all things
Till that foul wrong I have bred in your knight
I have expelled, and set your loves aright.

Re-enter Sir JOHN LOVEALL.

Sir John. Which now is done already. Madam, wife [*Kneels.*

Upon my knees with weeping eyes, heaved hands,
I ask thy pardon. O sweet, virtuous creature!
I prythee, break my head.

L. Per. Rise, rise, sir, pray.
You have done no wrong to me—at least, I think so:
Heaven hath prevented all my injury.
I do forgive, and marry you anew.
Come, we are all invited to the weddings:
The Lady Honour and the old rich count,
Young Bold unto another gentlewoman:
We and the widow are invited thither.
Embrace and love henceforth more really,
Not so like worldlings.

Sir John. Here then ends all strife.
Thus false friends are made true by a true wife. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in* Lord PROUDLY'S *House.*

Enter the COUNT, *wrapped in furs;* Lady HONOUR, *dressed like a* Bride; Lord PROUDLY, WELLTRIED, BOLD, *leading* Lord FEESIMPLE *like a* Lady *masqued;* Sir JOHN LOVEALL, Lady PERFECT, SUBTLE, Lady BRIGHT; *to them* FRANK, *with a letter;* SELDOM *with his* Wife.

Frank. Health and all joy unto this fair assembly.
My brother, who last tide is gone to France,
A branch of willow feathering his hat,
Bad me salute you, lady, and present you
With this same letter written in his blood.
He prays no man, for his sake, evermore
To credit woman, nor no lady ever
To believe man; so either sex shall rest
Uninjured by the other. This is all,
And this I have delivered.

L. Proud. Ay, and well.
You pronounce rarely, did you never play?
Frank. Yes, that I have—the fool, as some lords do.
Well. Set forward there.
Count. O, O, O! a pox o' this cold!
Well. A cold o' this pox, you might say, I'm afraid
L. Hon. How full of ghastly wounds this letter shows.
O, O! [*Swoons.*
L. Proud. Look to my sister.
Bold. 'Sheart! the lady swoons.
L. Per. Strong water there.
L. Fee. If strong breath would recover her, I am for her.
Count. Alas, good lady?—hum, hum, hum.
[*Coughs perpetually.*
Sub. He has fetched her again with coughing
L. Hon. Convey me to my bed; send for a priest
And a physician; your bride, I fear,
Instead of epithalamions shall need
A dirge or epitaph. O, lead me in:
My body dies for my soul's perjured sin.
[*Exeunt* Lady HONOUR, Lady PERFECT, Sir JOHN LOVEALL, SUBTLE, SELDOM *and* Mistress SELDOM.
Bold. Hymen comes towards us in a mourning robe.
Well. I hope, friend, we shall have the better day.
L. Proud. I'll fetch the parson and physician. [*Exit.*
Frank. They are both ready for you. [*Exit.*
Well. Madam, this is the gentlewoman
Who, something bashful, does desire your pardon,
That she does not unmask.
L. Bright. Good Master Welltried,
I would not buy her face; and for her manners,
If they were worse, they shall not displease me.
Well. I thank your ladyship.
L. Fee. Look how the old ass, my father, stands: he looks like the bear in the play; he has killed the lady

with his very sight.[1] As God help me, I have the mo to do to forbear unmasking me, that I might tell him his own, as can be.

Bold. Fie! by no means. The widow comes toward

Count. O, O, O, O! [you.

L. Bright. Servant, God give you joy; and, gentl Or lady, as full joy I wish to you: [wom Nor doubt that I will hinder you your love, But here am come to do all courtesy To your fair self, and husband that shall be.

L. Fee. I thank you heartily.

Well. 'Sheart! speak smaller, man.

L. Fee. I thank you heartily.

Count. You're going to this gear too, Master Bold? Um,

Bold. Not to your couching gear, [um, um! My lord. Though I be not so old or rich As your lordship, yet I love a young wench as well.

Well. As well as my lord? nay by my faith, That you do not love a young wench as well as he: I wonder you will be unmannerly to say so.

Count. Faith, Master Welltried, troth is I love them well, but they love not me, um, um. You see what ill-luck I have with them, um, um. A pox o' this cold, still say I.

Well. Where got you this cold, my lord? it can get in nowhere, that I can see, but at your nostrils or eyes; all other parts are so barricadoed with fur.

L. Fee. It got In at his eyes, and made that birdlime there, Where Cupid's wings do hang entangled.

Count. Is this your wife, that, um, um, um—shall be i Master Bold, I'll be so bold as kiss her.

[Lady BRIGHT *and* BOLD *whisper aside.*

L. Fee. Sir, forbear: I have one bold enough to kiss my lips. O old coxcomb! kiss thine own natural son; 'tis

[1] This refers, no doubt, to the scene in the old "most pleasant comedy of *Mucedorus*," 1598, when Amadine is pursued by the bear. —*Collier.*

worse than a justice lying with his own daughter. But, Master Welltried, when will the widow break this matter to me? [*The* COUNT *sits in a chair, and falls asleep.*

Well. Not till the very close of all: she dissembles it yet, because my lord, your father, is here, and her other suitor Bold.

L. Fee. That's all one; he's o' the plot o' my side.

L. Bright. 'Tis needless, Master Bold; but I will do Anything you require to satisfy you.
Why should you doubt I will forbid the banns,
For so your friend here told me? I should rather
Doubt that you will not marry.

Bold. Madam, by Heaven,
As fully I am resolved to marry now,
And will too, if you do not hinder it,
As ever lover was: only because
The world has taken notice of some passage
Betwixt you and me, and then to satisfy
My sweetheart here, who (poor soul!) is afraid,
To have some public disgrace put upon her,
I do require some small thing at your hands.

L. Bright. Well, I will do it; and this profess besides;
Married, you shall as welcome be to me
As mine own brother; and yourself, fair lady,
Even as myself, both to my board and bed.

Well. Ah, ah! how like you that?

L. Fee. Now she begins.
Abundant thanks unto your widowhood.
Zounds! my father's asleep on's wedding-day:
I wondered, where his cough was all this while.

Enter INGEN, *like a* Doctor: *a* Parson, FRANK, Lord PROUDLY, SELDOM, Mistress SELDOM, Sir JOHN LOVEALL, Lady PERFECT *and* SUBTLE.

Ingen. I pray, forbear the chamber; noise does hurt her
Her sickness I guess rather of the mind
Than of her body, for her pulse beats well;

Her vital functions not decayed a whit,
But have their natural life and operation.
My lord, be cheered, I have an ingredient
About me shall make her well, I doubt not.
In, master parson: it shall be yours to[1] pray;
The soul's physician should have still the way.

[*Exit; the* Parson *shuts the door.*

L. Bright. How cheers she, pray?

L. Per. In troth, exceeding ill.

Mis. Sel. A very weak woman indeed she is, and surely I think cannot 'scape it.

Sir John. Did you mark how she eyed the physician?

L. Per. O God, ay, she is very loth to die.

Mis Sel Ay; that's ne'er the better sign, I can tell you.

Sub. And when the parson came to her, she turned
Away, and still let the physician hold
Her by the hand.

Bold But see what thought the bridegroom takes,
My conscience knows, now, this is
A most preposterous match; yet for the commodity,
We wink at all inconveniency.
My lord! my lord!

Count. Um, um, um! I beshrew you for waking of me; now shall I have such a fit of coughing,—um, um!

Bold. O hapless wife, that shall have thee, that either must let thee sleep continually, or be kept waking herself by the cough.

L. Bright. You have a proper gentleman to your son, my lord: he were fitter for this young lady than you.

Well. D'ye mark that again?

L. Fee. O sweet widow!

Count. He a wife! he a fool's head of his own.

L. Fee. No, of my father's.

Count. What should he do with a—um, um!

L. Per. What, with a cough? why, he would spit, and that's more than you can do.

[1] This makes better sense than the old reading "I pray."

L. Proud. Your bride, my lord, is dead.

Count. Marry, even God be with her; grief will not help it: um, um, um!

Frank. A most excellent spouse.

L. Proud. How fares she, master doctor? Zounds! what's here?

Bold, L. Bright, Well., L. Fee. Heyday!

Sir John, Sel., Mis. Sel., Sub. How now?

[*Looking in at the window.*

L. Fee. Look, look! the parson joins the doctor's hand and hers: now the doctor kisses her, by this light! [*All whoop.*] Now goes his gown off. Heyday! he has red breeches on. Zounds! the physician is got o' the top of her: belike, it is the mother[1] she has. Hark! the bed creaks.

L. Proud. 'Sheart, the door's fast! break 'em open! We are betrayed.

Frank. No breaking open doors: he that stirs first,

[*Draws and holds out a pistol.*

I'll pop a leaden pill into his guts,
Shall purge him quite away. No haste, good friends:
When they have done what's fit, you shall not need
To break the door; they'll open it themselves.

[*A curtain is drawn and a bed discovered:* INGEN *with his sword in his hand and a pistol*: Lady HONOUR *in her petticoat*: *the* Parson.

L. Proud. Thy blood, base villain, shall answer this.

[Lord PROUDLY *and* INGEN *sit back to back.*

I'll dye thy nuptial bed in thy heart's gore.

Ingen. Come, come, my lord; 'tis not so easily done.
You know it is not. For this my attempt
Upon your sister, before God and man
She was my wife, and ne'er a bedrid goat
Shall have my wench to get diseases on.

L. Proud. Well may'st thou term her so, that has consented
Even with her will to be dishonoured.

[1] An hysterical fit.

Ingen. Not so, yet have I lain with her—
L. Hon. But first,
Witness this priest, we both were married.
Par. True it is, Domine;
Their contract's run into a marriage,
And that, my lord, into a carriage.
L. Proud. I will undo thee, priest.
Par. It is too late. I am undone
Already by wine and tobacco. I defy thee,
Thou temporal lord: perdy, thou never shalt
Keep me in jail, and hence springs my reason:
My act is neither felony nor treason.
L. Fee. Ay, sir; but you do not know what kindred she may have.
All. Come, come, there is no remedy.
L. Per. And weigh't right,
In my opinion, my honoured lord,
And everybody's else, this is a match,
Fitter ten thousand times than your intent.
All. Most certain 'tis.
L. Bright. Besides, this gentleman
Your brother-in-law's well parted and fair-meaned;
And all this come about (you must conceive)
By your own sister's wit, as well as his.
Ingen. Come, come, 'tis but getting of me knighted, my lord, and I shall become your brother well enough.
L. Proud. Brother, your hand. Lords may have pro-
But there's a greater Lord will have his will. [jects still,
Bold. This is despatch. Now, madam, is the time,
For I long to be at it. Your hand, sweetheart.
L. Fee. Now, boys. [witness
L. Bright. My lord and gentlemen, I crave your
To what I now shall utter. 'Twixt this gentleman
And myself, there have been some love passages
Which here I free him, and take this lady—[1]

[1] This is closer to the old copies than Mr. Hazlitt's reading, and the sense seems to me to be equally good. Perhaps with the words "take this lady," she leads Feesimple towards Bold.

Well. La ye! and pray him take this lady.

L. Bright. Which with a mother's love I give to him,
And wish all joy may crown their marriage.

Bold. Nay, madam, yet she is not satisfied.

[*Gives her a ring, which she puts on her thumb.*

L. Bright. Further, before ye all I take this ring,
As an *assumpsit*, by the virtue of which
I bind myself in all my lands and goods,
That in his choice I'll be no hindrance;
Or by forbidding banns, or claiming him
Myself for mine, but let the match go on
Without my check, which he intendeth now:
And once again I say, I bind myself.

Bold. Then, once again I say, widow, thou'rt mine!
Priest, marry us: this match I did intend:
Ye all are witnesses; if thou hinder it,
Widow, your lands and goods are forfeit mine.

L. Bright. Ha! nay, take me too, since there's no remedy.
Your widow (without goods) sells scurvily.

All. Whoop! God give you joy.

Count. 'Slight! I am cosened of all sides; I had good warrant.
hope of the widow myself; but now I see everybody
eaves me, saving,—um, um, um!

Bold. Troth, my lord, and that will stick by you, I
L. Bright. But how, sir, shall we salve this gentle-
Bold. Hang her, whore. woman?

Well. Fie! you are too uncivil.

L. Fee. Whore in thy face, I do defy thy taunts.

Bold. Nay, hold, fair lady: now I think upon't,
The old count has no wife; let's make a match.

All. If he be so contented.

Count. With all my heart.

Bold. Then kiss your spouse.

Count. 'Sfoot! she has a beard. How now! my son?

All. 'Tis the Lord Feesimple. [Lord FEE. *unmasks.*

L. Fee. Father, lend me your sword. You and I are
made a couple of fine fools, are we not? If I were not

valiant now, and meant to beat 'em all, here would lie a simple disgrace upon us, a Fee-simple one, indeed. Mark now, what I'll say to 'em. D'ye hear me, my masters? Damn me, ye are all the son of a whore, and ye lie, and I will make it good with my sword. This is called roaring, father.

Sub. I'll not meddle with you, sir.

L. Proud. You are my blood.

Well. And I fleshed you, you know. [now.

Bold. And I have a charge coming, I must not fight

L. Fee. Has either of you anything to say to me?

Sir John. Not we, sir.

L. Fee. Then have I something to say to you. Have you anything to say to me?

Frank. Yes, marry have I, sir.

L. Fee. Then I have nothing to say to you, for that's the fashion. Father, if you will come away with your cough, do. Let me see, how many challenges I must get writ. You shall hear on me, believe it.

L. Proud. Nay, we'll not now part angry: stay the That must attend the weddings. You shall stay. [feasts,

L. Fee. Why, then, all friends. I thought you would not have had the manners to bid us stay dinner neither.

Sir John. Then all are friends: and lady-wife, I crown Thy virtues with this wreath, that't may be said, There's a good wife.

Bold. A widow.

Ingen. And a maid.

[*They set garlands on the heads of* Lady PERFECT, Lady BRIGHT, *and* Lady HONOUR.

L. Per. Yet mine is now approved the happiest life, Since each of you hath changed to be a wife. [*Exeunt.*

UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, PRINTERS, WOKING AND LONDON.